



# PROBLEMS OF RECONSTRUCTION

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## FOREWORD

THE fourth lecture printed herein, on Educational Reconstruction, was given for the Society for the Promotion of National Education, and was delivered on December 23rd, the day before the commencement of the Theosophical Convention. I include the substance of it here, as it completes the series, though, by an error, it was not fully taken down.

ANNIE BESANT





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## LECTURE I

### RELIGIOUS RECONSTRUCTION

FRIENDS,

I have to address you this morning on the Problems of Religious Reconstruction. Yesterday morning I was dealing with the problems of the Reconstruction of National Education. To-morrow and the day after, I propose to deal with problems which will touch on the reconstruction of Society, and on the day after that with the problems of political life—on the deeper political problems, on which, as on all other serious and profound questions, the light of the Divine Wisdom ought to be shed. As many of you well know, the very meaning of the word Theosophy is Divine Wisdom. There is nothing in human life, nothing in the whole range of human knowledge, which does not come within the purview of Divine Wisdom, that wisdom which, according to the ancient Hebrew saying, “mightily and sweetly ordereth all things”. There is a tendency, a natural tendency, to limit the name, as though it were a label on some special product, and that tendency is the more natural perhaps, when the name is founded on a foreign tongue—in this case the Greek. If it were

called in English "God-Wisdom" or "Divine Wisdom," if it were called in Samskr̥t̥ Brahma Vidyā, if it were called, as among the early Christians, Gnosticism, then it would be realised that there was nothing in it limited or narrow. Then it would be realised, as in the old definition given in an Upaniṣhat of Brahma Vidyā, that it has two divisions, the lower and the upper—the Aparā Vidyā and the Parā Vidyā—that in the lower there are comprised all subjects of human knowledge without exception, everything in fact which can be taught by human voice and heard by human ear. The higher, the Supreme Wisdom—the Parā Brahma Vidyā—is the realisation of God Himself. That is called sometimes "knowledge" because our human language is poor. It is not really knowledge, the Parā Vidyā: it is realisation. You may remember how in another Upaniṣhat it is written: "He who says 'I know,' he knows not"; a contradiction, a paradox, because knowledge implies an Object of knowledge and a Knower, and knowledge is the relation between the Knower and the Object that is known. But in the realisation of the Infinite Deity there is no knower and no object of knowledge. There is perfect unity. There is One without a second. There is the gathering up of all life into the Life Universal, of all selves into the One Self, of whom they are the offspring. Hence Parā Vidyā is not knowledge: it is realisation—the realisation of the unity, of the merging of the separated selves

with the One, that which leads man to say, not "I know," but to feel "I am"—that which is beyond all language, which is in the silence, the realisation of the unity of the part with the whole, the incommunicable secret of Existence itself. But language is poor, and so we have to speak of Divine Knowledge, Divine Wisdom: that is the essence, that the aim of all religion; and then comes the lower wisdom, as I have just quoted from the Upaniṣhat, the knowledge of all things which man can teach to man. Realisation is individual experience. Of that I shall have to speak; but the lower wisdom, the lower Divine Wisdom, includes everything which can be learnt, which can be taught: there is nothing outside its area, there is nothing that can be excluded from its purview. Not only human life but all life comes within its infinite embracing, and everything which can concern the embodied God within us comes within the influence of the wisdom that is Divine.

Hence you will find in human history that every great, new civilisation has a new expression of religion behind it; every fresh proclamation of religion is brought by some mighty Teacher, superhuman in His knowledge. His compassion, His wisdom; every such repetition of the ancient story is the beginning of a new form of religious belief, suited to the time, suited to the people, suited to the stage of evolution in which that people are. Hence we find that looking over history, we can distinguish

the stages of civilisation by the re-proclamation of the ancient spiritual truths : always the same, always the Eternal Truth, that which the Hindū calls the *Sanātana Dharma* ; that is the Eternal *Veḍa*, the Eternal Knowledge, but as the ancient traditions of Hindūism say, the *Veḍa* which is One. It is divided into more, into two, into three, into four, according to the needs of the Age and the capacities of the people. So each of the varied religions of the world, each of them has its own place, its own work, its forming of the polity for the Nation. It is the building of a civilisation which is to influence the world.

In the very ancient days we find that every Nation had its own religion. You might go further back. You know that there were times when in families and in groups of families, which were the seed of a future Nation, there were special forms of worship, special family ceremonies, special family rites in which every member of the family took part, and the rest of the world were outside. Then we find that as families grew into tribes there were tribal religions, and only those who were members of the tribe knew the secrets of the tribal faith ; and as the tribes grew into Nations, similarly we find there were National religions, so that when you look over the ancient world with its many Nations, you do not find them quarrelling about religions. Every Nation had its own faith. Religion was part of the National life. To leave the National religion was to be a

traitor to the State. Nation and religion were one and indivisible. That was the ancient State, right down to the times of Republican and Imperial Rome ; and so in the Roman Empire there was no interference with the religions of the people, and in the great city of Rome you find the Pantheon, the temple to "all the Gods". Every National religion in the Roman Empire was represented in that temple, and all were on the same level, all were regarded and honoured. Hence in those old times, if there was a quarrel, then religion took part in it as part of the Nation, but it was not, in the same sense as now, a religious quarrel. The rebuke to the Hebrews was that they went after *strange* Gods. But with the advent first of Christianity, which claimed to be a universal religion and therefore challenged all other religions and put them down together as "heathendom," there came quarrels and persecutions. Rome persecuted Christians, not because they worshipped Christ, but because they refused to bow to the Roman Emperor as divine and thus attacked the Roman polity ; because they claimed that theirs was the only Faith, and Rome could not have its deities trampled upon, could not have its worship blasphemed. The test was, would a man throw incense on the altar of Cæsar ? If he would not, he was a traitor to the State ; and thus there came in the religious idea of persecution ; and from that time onward this claim was heard. Similarly with the



mighty religion of Islām, later in history. That also claimed to be a universal religion, and we shall see in a moment the value of that claim on the part of Christianity and of Islām as regards the relationship between Nations, for these great changes in history are not accidental. These departures in individual character are not matters of chance. They are all part of the plan of those guiding hands which shape human destiny and guide human evolution.

While first I drew your attention to the Nationality of religions, I shall want in a moment to draw your attention to the inter-Nationality of religions—a very different step. Now for a moment pause on that, and notice how in those ancient religions the National idea persists. Take Hindūism, the most ancient living Faith. You cannot be a Hindū unless you are born into Hindūism. No amount of acceptance of Hindū doctrine, no amount of living the Hindū ideal of life, no knowledge of Hindū philosophy, will avail to turn into a Hindū a person who has not Hindū parents, who does not belong by birth, to the Hindū Faith. Take myself, if you like, as an example, who certainly know more of Hindūism than, I fancy, a good many of you do. Having made a deeper study of it, living much more of a Hindū life than a good many of you do, who nominally belong to it, I yet cannot be a Hindū; the gate is shut. That has one advantage and one disadvantage. It has the advantage of teaching tolerance

of other Faiths. If they keep me outside Hindūism, if I cannot enter it, clearly Hindūism cannot say to me : " You must not have any religion." That would be outrageous, and so you find the note of Hindūism in the words of Shri Kṛṣṇa in the *Bhagavad-Gītā* : " Mankind comes to me along many roads, and on the road on which a man approaches me, on that road do I welcome him, for all roads are mine." There lies the advantage in the way of tolerance. The disadvantage is that as intercommunication spreads, as Nations have more to do with each other and people are not born as they were in the old days, in a caste according to their past, but rather according to the use to be made of them in their lives, Hindūism cannot spread and cannot affect other religions as a Christian missionary can ; and Christianity and Islām can become World Faiths, but Hindūism must remain only a National religion. That has a great disadvantage. In the first place, Hindūism is the root religion of the whole Āryan Race. The Āryan Race has spread all over the world. It has spread into Persia, and there gave birth to Zoroastrianism. It spread along the Mediterranean coasts, and gave birth to the great religions of Greece and Rome, which have influenced the whole of the Latin races. It spread over Europe, carrying with it its deathless love of freedom and its evolved capacity for Self-Government. It carried its village communities into Scandinavia, into England, into

Germany, into Slavonian countries. It carried all its characteristics with it, but not its religion. But in that religion all the great doctrines are contained, and there is nothing in the later religions that you cannot find in Hindūism. There is no doctrine of Christianity, there is no doctrine of Islām, there is no doctrine of any great Faith, that is not part of Hindūism, and embodied in Hindū philosophy. What is there more all-pervading than the Vedānta? What philosophy more all-embracing than the philosophic systems of the Hindū religion? I would ask you to think that although Hindūism has been priceless in making an Indian Nation possible, it has a duty to its younger children also, it has a duty to its children scattered over the whole world. It ought not to keep out those who are essentially members of the great Faith, nor deny to them the entrance into their inheritance because they happen to have been born outside the limits of Hindustan. It is not a question to be lightly decided. It is a question to be thought over, because the present system means a diminishing number of Hindūs in comparison with the spreading religions which have no such National limitations. It means that Hindūism diminishes, while the others grow, and that the Mother Religion of the Āryan Race is at a disadvantage everywhere, save within the limits of India. That is a problem I would put to you as stewards of a magnificent Faith; it is too mighty to be limited within a single people. It is

inter-National and not only National. But you must think it over for yourselves. Karma gives to you the right to decide; but at least it is true that even if the heritage of Hindūism be held back for India, your literature is going over the whole civilised world, your Upaniṣhaṭs are studied in the West as well as in the East, your *Bhagavad-Gītā*, the Song of the Lord, is sung in every country and in every climate. They read it within the Arctic zone; they study it over the whole of Europe; it has spread into far-off America; and it is moulding the thought of the whole Āryan Race, although the name of Hindū may not be given to those who follow its teachings. That great treasure is a treasure you have created for the world; and your isolation for a time was permitted in order that you might keep the treasure unspoiled and unpolluted and unstained, until by your union with the British Empire you came into touch with a language which has become the world-language of the future, and your Scriptures, translated into English, are now moulding the thought of the whole world.

Consider, then, that inter-National question. There is a great value in an inter-National religion. Take Christianity and take Islām, the two great missionary religions: they leap over the bounds of a Nation; they realise a larger unity. The Musalmān, wherever he is, whatever his Nationality, finds a brother in another Musalmān, finds a friend and a comrade in

any part of the world where the Faith of the great Prophet of Arabia has spread and made its way. A mosque is being built in London; English Musalmāns live in Liverpool; and every child of Islām is a brother of every other child. Thus you forge links which are being woven between Nations, which in time will make war impossible. That is what an inter-National religion can do when it gains full power. It can draw all Nationalities together. You know that there has been a difficulty here in India because of the ties of Islām outside India. Granting there are difficulties for the moment, while the barbarous system of war as a decider of inter-National quarrels exists, although there may be difficulties to-day, they have the seed of future peace within them, when religion shall grow so strong that it shall say to the Nations: "You shall not tear each other in pieces; you are brothers in the same Faith." And so one hopes with Christianity. Christianity has had a curious history. It has divided and divided in a way that no other religion has done. You have the Church of Rome, widespread, mighty, found in all civilised States. You have the posterity of the revolt against Rome in the most progressive Nations of the world—Nonconformist, Episcopalian, Presbyterian, whatever the name may be. Now in Christianity and in Islām, individuality has been developed as part of the work of the religion. The result is that, especially in

Christianity, in the division between Roman Catholic and non-Roman Catholic—I do not like the word Protestant, because you cannot live by protest against somebody else—you notice how that religion has worked as a dividing force. In Ireland it has made Self-Government impossible. Ulster is aggressively Protestant. Three-fourths of Ireland is equally aggressively Roman Catholic, conquered by England, and struggling for some seven hundred years. Laws were passed against Roman Catholics—laws of the most terrible description, entering into the inner lives of the people. The penal laws against the Roman Catholics of Ireland were the scandal of civilisation, and have made a gulf which is unbridgeable, a gulf that separates Britain from Ireland to-day. In England, Roman Catholics burnt their opponents, and in the next reign their opponents hanged and pressed Roman Catholics to death. In the reign of Akbar there was tolerance of all religions in India, while Queen Elizabeth was murdering Roman Catholics and Queen Mary was murdering Protestants. Penal laws remained down to the last century, until in 1829 was passed the Act for Catholic Emancipation : yet even to-day the oath that the King takes on his Coronation contains an insult to the Roman Catholic Church, against which his Roman Catholic subjects have protested. That is religion as a dividing force. But as people become more tolerant, the uniting force begins to show itself. Now in Islām, while it has been—against the

teaching of its Prophet—a persecuting religion, it has one thing in it marked and splendid, and that is, it embodies the spirit of democracy. There lies peace lasting into the future. That religion, more than any other, regards every Musalmān as a brother. He may be a prince, he may be a peasant, he may be rich, he may be poor, he may be living in a hovel, he may be living in a palace, but he is a brother Musalmān and he is welcomed. On, into the modern world with its changed conditions, that message of democracy has come through the mouth of Islām very, very largely, and the world should be grateful to Islām because that lesson is of the very essence of its Faith. Spreading as it does over many countries, influencing as it does many peoples, it shares with Christianity the advantage of being an inter-National religion ; and when we have a League of Nations, when men realise their duty to other Nations as well as to their own, then these two great religions will be of world-wide importance, because they are not religions of Races nor of Nations, but are universal and can welcome every child of man. There lies the value inter-National, compared with the value of National religions of which I have spoken. That question is one of the great problems of religion that have to be solved—not in a hurry, but slowly, gradually, by argument, by reason, by sentiment.

Now there is one way in which they will find their unity. Religion is one: religions are many. By

that I mean that the inner heart of every Faith is the same, is not in opposition to another ; and there is one way in which Religion shows itself, which is a uniting force. You who are Hindūs call it Brahma Viḍyā, Parā Viḍyā. Christians generally call it Mysticism in these modern days : it is the Realisation of God. On that there is no quarrel between Christian and Hindū, between Musalmān and Hebrew, between Zoroastrian and Jaina and Sikh. All Mystics say the same thing. All Mystics realise the same truth, and that is, their unity in spirit. The Hindū says : " I am That." The Musalmān teaches the same, along the line of Sūfism. The Christian Roman Catholic uses the tremendous phrase " deification of man ". You can have no stronger phrase than " Man becoming God," and that is recognised in the authorised literature of the Roman Catholic Church. The saint has found it, the yogī has found it, the knower of the truth has found it, and they none of them disagree. Religion is founded on experience, not on books or Churches or authority or argument or reasoning. From That, the Upaniṣhaṭ says, " reason falls back in silence ". There is no argument, no voice. And so, that inner truth of religion, the Realisation of God, is the uniting force in all religions. Whereas the forms are different, just as the mind of every one of you is different from the mind of his neighbour, so your own religion is different from others ; it is only the form that your mind prefers and most readily



accepts. It does not really matter in what religion you are born: they are all ways to God. Some forms of truth suit you and some do not. You find your religion in the way that suits you best, whether by the gateway of birth or by some other way, but the essence is the same.

A great dignitary of the Christian Church—the Dean of S. Paul's—in London, lecturing on Mysticism, used the very same phrase as occurs in the *Bhagavad-Gītā*—I do not know if he had read it. You remember the phrase which says: The Scriptures, “the Vedas, are as useful to the enlightened Brāhmaṇa”—not Brāhmaṇa by birth, but Brāhmaṇa by wisdom—“as a tank in a land flowing over with water”. If you are illuminated, all books lose their value, and the Dean of S. Paul's said in his lecture that Mysticism was the only scientific form of religion, and that the Mystic did not want the truth as water contained in a reservoir, because he had truth within himself, the spring of living water which rose up within him. It is the same simile in the East and the West. He in whom the Divine life has broken forth as an upspringing fountain, needs no teaching from outside by mouth of man or by written book, for the source of all books is the experience of divinity, and the Shāstras are but the expression of truth through the mouth of a man become Divine, truth flowing through the Ṛshi, the Seer. A Mystic has gone beyond the human teacher, and has become taught of God.

That truth we must press as the foundation of every Nation, of every civilisation—whatever be the form of religion, we need not any particular religion, but Religion itself. The essence is the same, whether you take the ancient civilisation of Persia, founded on the teaching of its great prophet of Iran, whether you take the religion of Greece or Rome, whether you take the religion of Christ, whether you take the religion of the Lord Muhammad, or the religion of the Hindūs from the R̥shis of the ancient days—all those are expressions of Religion, not Religion itself. Religion is their heart, Religion is their might, Religion is their essence, but each one is suited to its birth-place, and out of that comes a new civilisation.

When that is realised, how are you going to meet it in your modern world? Take one case—the case of education. There are two ways in education, in making a religion part of it; one, to have a School belonging to each Faith—the Hindū School, the Musalmān School, the Jain School, the Sikh School. To these boys and girls is taught one form of religion. They go out into the outer world and meet men of other Faiths. It may, or may not, make them narrow, and instead of drawing them together, divide them as men, as they were divided in their education as boys and girls. That is one way. There is the other way that we call the Theosophical ideal, in which every religion is taught in the school that has boys or girls belonging to its Faith, taught by one of their Faith,

a Hindū boy by a Hindū teacher, a Musalmān boy by a Musalmān teacher, and so on. But everything else is common in school, except the special teaching of the form of doctrines in religion. In the mornings when all meet together for common worship, what happens? A Hindū boy gets up and chants a Hindū sloka; a Musalmān boy gets up and chants from *Al Quran*; a Christian boy gets up and reads a portion of the New Testament, and similarly a Buddhist. All join in the common worship voiced in the different languages of the different Faiths. And so they learn that all religions are really one, that there is only one God to whom all prayers go up. You may pray in Samskr̥t, in Arabic, in English—there is no language for God. He looks at the heart and not at the lip. Boys love God, love and reverence all religions, while they learn their own. And in such schools they generally finish by the common song of “Vande Mātaram”—the Motherland. Those are the two ways. You must decide which you think the better. The one thing important is that Religion should be taught: it is the foundation of character, the foundation of moral living in childhood, manhood and womanhood. Such problems arise within the religions..

Now comes a problem that is partly religious and partly National. You have seen there is a tendency in religion to divide. Take this country—the Indian Motherland. You have a very, very powerful

Hindū community, a very powerful Islāmic community, a smaller Christian community, but powerful because it belongs to the religion of the rulers. How should these affect your civic life? That is a problem you must all be thinking over now, and about which you must make up your minds. Are there to be divisions in your Nation? Are you to have a Christian community, a Muhammadan community, a Hindū community, a Pārsī community, a Sikh community and a Jaina community, quarrelling with each other? Where is the Nation among these? Are they to divide, and divide, and divide, until you have as many camps in your Nation as you have religions?

Or, are you to realise that while you may worship in different buildings, the Nation is one? That while you may pray in the mosque or the temple or the church, it is the Indian who is praying in them all, it is one God to whom he prays? Are you to understand, what is true, that in your civic assemblies, in your provincial councils, in your National assemblies, your civic interests are the same? The outer form of your religion is separate. There is no real difference between a Musalmān and a Hindū in regard to Indian matters. They differ in the forms of their law, differences in marriage customs, inheritance, etc., but those differences are not differences of the civic community but of the religious community. Would it not be wiser to do what all the more progressive Nations are doing, to let a man's

Faith be his own, that none shall challenge ; that all Faiths shall be equal before the law ; that religion shall give advantage to no man and disadvantage to no man ; but that in all matters not relating to religious differences, there shall be one people, one Nation, one undivided community, struggling to uplift the Nation as a whole, and not wasting its strength in internecine quarrels on religion ? It cannot come at once, but might it not be an ideal ?

Think for a moment of England. England has quarrelled over religions as bitterly as you have done. There is as much difference between Roman Catholic and Protestant historically, as there is between Hindū and Musalmān historically ; but when Catholics were emancipated, religious quarrels disappeared. No one asks now in a political election : "Is it a Roman Catholic standing or a Protestant standing ?" His politics are asked about, his opinions which affect the welfare of the country are criticised : his religion gives no advantage and no disadvantage. The law knows nothing of religious differences, but only that a citizen is—good, bad or indifferent.

I suggest that that is the ideal. You may not be able to take it at once, I grant, but it is the ideal to be worked up to, when there shall be no communal quarrels in matters of politics, when Religion shall not be a force to divide but a force to unite, and when people shall no longer dare to say to you : " You are

divided so much in religions that we cannot trust you to manage your own civic affairs." That is another problem you have to deal with.

There are other problems of Religion put from the outside, not from the inside. Take one which is perennial, another which is immediate. The perennial question is, why is there evil in the world at all, if the world comes from God and God can only be good? Men have asked that question constantly, and the older religions have answered it. Hindūism answers it; the religion of the Hebrews answers it. The Hebrew says through the mouth of one of his Prophets: "Shall there be evil in the city, and the Lord hath not done it?" That is to say, in other language, evil and good are relative terms and vary with the stage of evolution that you have reached. Your morality is a growing thing. You had morality only of the family, then of the village. I came across, the other day, in reading some old Indian history, the trial of a man who had killed another man, and the other man belonged to another village. If he had killed a man of his own village, the penalty would have been very heavy, but as the other man belonged to another village, he only had to burn a lamp in the temple. Morality increases in area as living together increases, and it widens out from family to tribe, from tribe to community, from community to province and from province to Nation; and there it stands at present. You have no inter-National

morality—it is no good pretending that you have : it is only a farce. If you had inter-National morality, could you murder with a million bayonets, yet not with a simple knife? It is murder if you kill a man, but war if you kill a million. Now there *is* a difference. The one is motivated by a private grudge, and that is the motive of the murder. The other is moved by a larger motive, but not always a very noble one ; none the less, killing is barbarous, however it is done : I do not say that it is not necessary ; I am one of those who think that the war which has just now ended was a righteous war. I believe that it was necessary to check the aggression of Germany, with the arrogant forces which she can command, and to prevent the triumph of autocracy and the crushing down of Nations under a frightful yoke. But I recognise at the same time that war is only a barbarous way of meeting danger. I do say that we have no inter-National morality : it is beginning, it is growing, it has not yet triumphed ; and that is one of your problems of the future. It is part of the larger problem of evil and good. Can you think of any other method of evolving the seed of divinity except the method of slow evolution from savage to civilised man, from the criminal to the saint? How else will you develop that seed of Godhead, unless His will becomes determined by Self-determination and not by the compulsion of outer law? As long as a man

*wants* to do wrong, that man is evil, no matter how you may appraise him by law. If he hates his neighbour, the seed of murder is in him : that you have to remember. There is no perfection until the Divine Will in the man is so evolved that of his own free choice he does the right and delights to do it. When he does not want to do wrong, when he does not want to trample on his neighbour, when he would rather lift up than cast down, when he uses his strength and his help to protect, to guide, to help in every way that strength can help weakness, then he is becoming divine. How are you going to evolve this and develop this ? Would you force a man to do a right ? But that is the outer law compelling : it does not evolve man. That is the real problem of evil. There is no other way save leaving man comparatively free to live rightly or wrongly, to have the law which is ever about him, encircling him, so that when he goes wrong he strikes against the law, and maims and even slays his mortal body, because he has gone against the law. That is the true nature of the Universe, and it ever tends to good. That which is an evil for the civilised man is good for the savage : he has to develop by experience ; there is no other way : he has to learn that in the world of which God is the life, selfishness of the body means suffering, until he feels instinctively and learns the joy of the Spirit, which is Sacrifice. When you say sacrifice you think of suffering, but Sacrifice is the life and



the joy of the Spirit, the pouring out of everything ; that is how the Spirit lives, for God has poured Himself into the world in order that man may develop, and the joy of the man who is touching Divinity is to give and not to take. That is where Sacrifice is life and joy : it is not pain and suffering ; the body may suffer but the heart rejoices ; the body may be mutilated but the Spirit lives and unfolds by that very pain ; and the time comes when the pain is over and only the joy of the giving remains, and those words spoken by Christ become true : " It is more blessed to give than to receive."

That brings me to the problem of the war : only a special case of evil. Now, what happened in this war ? The young of the Nations have perished. Take any English paper that you like, where there are pictures, and where they put on the page the roll of honour ; look at the faces—boys many of them. When you look at them with their clear eyes outlooking, you can see that they are the joy of their mothers' hearts—lads with soft, gentle mouths, not yet hardened by experience, with bright faces not yet stained by suffering—it is these who have died in the largest numbers during the war. And when men see that, they say : " What is to be the future of the Nation ? Those are the men who ought to have been the fathers of the coming generation, and they are dead." Think what it was in England at the time when the war broke out. It was the young men that came forward.

There was no conscription then. The Universities of Oxford and Cambridge emptied themselves into battalions; young men of noble birth and of wealth, with bright, joyous prospects before them, flung themselves into the death grip for the sake of law and liberty. When the young men of a Nation can do that, it means that there is life in the Nation, despite any errors. But they have gone; the Nation has them no more. How do you explain it? God rules the world; why should the best of all be taken away? Your Indian soldiers who went to fight a quarrel which was not theirs, who faced climatic conditions the like of which they had never known before, who faced suffering that they had never dreamt of, and who fought to the death and died where they stood rather than turn their backs—they have also gone. Scarcely any of that first great army has come home again: they lie in Flanders, in Italy, in Mesopotamia, in Eastern Africa, dead, as men say; but that which is death to the body is, under such conditions, evolution and new life to the undying Spirit immortal. You may mow them down with machine-guns, you may kill them with bombs, you may leave no traces; the body flies in every direction, but the Spirit does not move. The Spirit has gained, it has not lost. They are young men who gave up everything the world could offer in order to die, and to die for a great ideal, for a broken treaty, for a torn-up scrap of paper. The

flag of a Nation is no rag : it is the glory and honour of the Nation, a tradition of the Nation, and to die for a principle like that, is to take a leap forward in evolution and to do in glorious death what might have taken centuries to accomplish in ordinary life. That is what has happened. If you cannot believe in reincarnation, I do not know how you can explain this. We know that these men are coming back into new bodies to build the new civilisation that will grow up now. They may not be the fathers of the next generation, because they compose the next generation themselves, but they bring back to the world's helping all they have won by a spirit of sacrifice—their increased knowledge, their greater devotion, their more passionate love of humanity ; and they will come crowding in thousands, tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands, to gather round the Teacher, the Teacher who comes to found a new civilisation. That is what the war means to us : a war waged for right against wrong. It is a splendid thing for those who suffer. It is my belief that war will pass away, that we shall grow beyond it. But my belief that international law shall take the place of warring Nations, cannot blind me to the fact that these wars, where they are waged for noble principles, are one of God's ways of unfolding more quickly the Spirit that He needs for His helping, and of establishing a more glorious civilisation based on a nobler ideal.

Then think out that problem, and you will see how this belief shapes one's life over the most terrible scenes during the last four years and more. Realise that we shall have our men back again, that they will come to help, and that our duty now is to do the utmost we can in a religious spirit for the evolving of whatever Nation we may be living in at the time; for the religious spirit means the uplift of the whole and not only the uplift of a part. Within a Nation, it means that the poorest, the most miserable, the most degraded, shall be lifted up so that they may share in the culture and the happiness and the welfare of the Nation. If this belief is true, so long as a Nation has a degraded class, the whole Nation is degraded by its existence. So long as a Nation has people starving, the food taken by others is not wholly nourishing. As long as a Nation has an ignorant class, so long wisdom cannot be reached by the rest of the Nation that allows them to be ignorant. So long as some people are trampled under foot and treated as untouchables, so long is God untouchable, for Religion means unity, Religion means harmony, Religion means recognition of a common source of life, a common source of good, and all the problems of Religion are answered by two words: "Knowledge and Brotherhood," the activity that uses knowledge in a brotherly way, for the uplift of every child of man in the Nation.

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## LECTURE II

### SOCIAL RECONSTRUCTION

FRIENDS :

To-day I am to speak to you on the Problems of Social Reconstruction. In every country these problems are arising. Some countries have already taken them into consideration, and discussions are going on. In the United States of America, the Theosophical Society has formed a Bureau for Social Reconstruction, in which arrangements are beginning to form a definite Movement in favour of a reconstruction which shall be based on the great principle of Brotherhood. In England the subject is already being discussed, and here in India we are bound carefully to consider it. Circumstances will differ in different Nations to some extent, but in all the Western Nations and also in India—affected so largely by European civilisation—the same general aspect is to be seen. There are additional circumstances in India which do not arise in the same form in the West, but the fundamental difficulty is the same in all.

In order to understand how the problems arise, we have to look back for a time at the different social polities that existed in former times, whether in the West or in the East. You have to remember that the leading Western Nations all belong to offshoots of your own Āryan race. Therefore social conditions arose in those Nations similar to those which arose here. That is a point too often forgotten in the researches of modern historians in the West, especially of German historians, on this subject. The researches of Indian historians and scholars here, have unburied the earlier conditions in India, so that we have, both in East and West, an outline of the social arrangements of the great Āryan race—we Theosophists call it the Fifth Root Race, but the name does not matter much. The name Āryan is a familiar name here.

In the West also, that name is now recognised. It is admitted that the race arose in Asia; further that it settled either in northern Asia, as some think, or Central Asia, as other antiquarians contend. You may remember the famous work by B. G. Tilak, *The Arctic Home of the Aryan Race*. That is largely on the same line of thought as in our own Theosophical teaching. For while it is true that the early emigrants out of the preceding race came, under the Lord Vaivasvata Manu, from the Atlantean Continent, through Egypt to Arabia and Asia, and then to the northern part of Asia, they

were a very small selection, as you may say, to be counted by families, scarcely by tribes, not as yet by large communities. They travelled in huge caravans and made their way through the western part of Asia up to the north, to the borders of the northern sea. Then they travelled southwards and eastwards, and settled down in that sacred centre, the name of which is familiar to all of you who are Hindūs in your own Purāṇas. They came on, down to the Sveṭa Dvīpa, the White Island, to the sacred city of Shamballa. They came under the protection of those mighty Ones whom you speak of as the Kumāras—of Sanat Kumāra, the Head of all. There they dwelt with their Manu for long, multiplying and multiplying, until a great Nation was gradually formed in Central Asia. Then you had some offshoots going to many lands: some into Japan, where the traces of Āryan blood are still to be found in that Fourth-Race people; some going into Java, where many traces are left, and even further afield; then came the great period in which that Race, with its customs established, began the series of emigrations to Egypt, to Greece, to Russia, and westwards to form the peoples of Europe when it was gradually arising from its marshy condition into solid land. First went out the second sub-race—the root-stock remains as the first sub-race—the great emigration which peopled the shores of the Mediterranean, which in Egypt founded one of the great dynasties of the Āryan type.

Traces you can see in faces of that same Aryan type in the frescoes in the Chambers of the Egyptian Pyramids. There have been many invasions and conquests, and now the type is seen only among the peasant people. To-day among them you find the Aryan type, the chiselled features, the high nose which is sometimes mentioned as of the "high-nosed people from the north".

The third sub-race went to Persia, and built up the mighty kingdom of the Persians, Iran as it was called, under the shelter of the great Prophet whose name is barbarised into Zoroaster, who gave the religion of fire, whose descendants in religion are Zoroastrians, or Pārsīs, who came into India and were welcomed, and live amongst us as an honoured community to-day.

Then the fourth went out to the Caucasus, and beyond, and it built ancient Greece, and later built ancient Rome and spread, making the beginnings of those called the "Latin races" in Europe. The Latin races are now the Italians, the Spaniards, the French, the Irish, and the people of the north of Scotland. The fifth was that of the Teutons, to the northern Caucasus, and these Teutons spread westward, into Poland, into Slavonia. From them also came those who were called the Prussians, and the Angles and the Saxons that you read about in the north and the south of Britain. Why have I given you this list of sub-races, of



settlers in the western lands? To tell you that while all this was going on, the root-stock of the people came down into India by Baluchistan, by Kashmir and Assam, and gradually spread southward, and became the dwellers in India, as we know it to-day. They came down here with definite customs, and those customs were carried westward by the fourth sub-race that we call the Keltic, by the fifth sub-race that we call the Teutonic. Whether we look at the parent in India or the children in the West, we find that they all founded village communities, and ruled those village communities themselves. That is a point that I want you to remember, for that is the old Aryan civilisation. You find those village communities all over Europe, and German historians have traced them more accurately and more clearly than any other Europeans have done.

I now come to England. When the Saxons came to England, when the Angles came to England, they brought the village community with them. They came to England some forty years after the last of the Romans had left the country. The Roman civilisation left its traces, but the Romans went, and had to fight for their own life in Italy, and were, as you know, overwhelmed by the invaders from the north. The Saxons came to England and brought their village customs with them. Here, in India, the same village customs prevailed, and the plan of your Indian village was the plan of the Saxon

villages in England. We have the account of both. What was the plan of the Indian village? The temple generally in the middle, then the households round that, every man with his own homestead, every man with his own yard-garden at the back. That is the property of the family, as family; then outside that, a ring of agricultural land assigned to the people as common property of the village, but given over for individual arable culture, sometimes remaining in the same family year after year, sometimes annually redistributed. Outside the cultivable arable land, the ring of pasture; and there the cattle, sheep, etc., all had their pasture, and the village servant—the village shepherd—looked after the whole of those animals for the village to which he belonged; then, outside that, rough ground, the forest land belonging to the village for fuel, for green manure, for wood for house-building, for fences, or anything that was wanted. The village land as a whole was the common property, the village property. There were no very rich people; but there were none miserably poor, there were none who wanted food, there were none who had not some property in the land as members of that village community. Pañchamas were there: they had their own houses, their own homesteads as the other villagers had; they shared in the right to cut wood from the forest, and every village right belonged to them that belonged to the other people, save, as we can see, for the

fact that they worked for wages while the other villagers had the common ownership of the soil; the Pañchamas' land was assigned to them: they had their rights as had all the other villagers. There was no quarrel as there is to-day, as to the difficulty of the non-caste man having a piece of land and a house. They had their rights as men recognised, as they ought to be recognised in every civilised country.

Exactly that system was found also in England—the houses of the villagers, a group of families always at first; then the arable mark—"mark" means boundary—divided among the families; then the pasture land, good pasture; then the rough pasture and the forest: exactly on the same plan as the villages here. The system of government was the same. Every head of a household had a right to serve on the council, or to choose the men who should represent him in the administration of the village affairs. While the village was very small, the heads of households administered it directly. As it grew larger, they chose representatives, and you may read, if you have time, how they voted. They voted then in various ways, by lot, by ballots of differently coloured woods, secretly or openly. There were qualifications for voters. Certain crimes disqualified the voter, and his name must not be written in the list. Then you may read how the committees were formed—a committee for irrigation, a committee for justice, a committee for looking after

the land, a committee for the apportioning of paths to different villages. You may think that it sounds like a fairy tale. But you find it in inscriptions cut into stone ; you find it in the copper plates that have been dug up, that show the arrangements in different villages, and you find the list of the village servants there, the records running from three to four centuries before the Christian Era right down to the nineteenth century. That was the old way, and most of the people lived in villages. Those villages were grouped together, as you may read in Manu's *Institutes*. Sometimes groups remained Republics, in the old form of Government by Council. In other cases they were monarchical, and when they needed a chief of the army he was apt gradually to become a King. We find the village government reproduced by the Lord Buddha in His Saṅgha. When He was here in India, six centuries before the Christian Era, He formed His Order of monks, His Saṅgha. He modelled it on these village Republics, and made the groups of His own Saṅgha meet regularly for the discharge of business. The method of voting again was by coloured tickets, and it might be either secret or public. I have collected some of these facts together and they are now published, so as to answer the pretence that in the Indian polity there is nothing except absolute monarchy until the Westerners came here and brought their ideas to help us. The truth is that in the Aryan there is

innate the spirit of Self-Government, the love of liberty, and the capacity of managing his own affairs in his own way. These village Governments existed until in the south of India they were destroyed by the raiyāt-wāri system in 1816, introduced by the East India Company on the advice of Sir Thomas Munro. It is the natural Government in India to have Self-Governing management of affairs by the people themselves.

In England the change from this came by the Norman Conquest. Then there came to be the Lord of the Manor, who sought to *own* the land; but since then, down to the present day, in some parts of southern Scotland the old system survives in the rights of members of a certain community to own land. The land cannot be touched until those few representatives of the past give consent.

Now in India for thousands of years, if there was an invasion and another ruler arose in some part of the country, it did not make very much difference. The people who came to conquer remained to settle, and they accepted the laws of the country and followed the customs which they found existing here. Take the incursions of those whose descendants are now our Musalmān brethren. What did they do as they conquered and settled? They accepted the old Hindū polity. Take the land tax of the great Emperor Akbar, and compare it with that laid down in the *Institutes* of Manu. They did not upset the old customs of the country. Further, Akbar

had as his finance minister a Hindū, as leader of the army a Hindū, and the Mughals became Indians, and did not remain foreigners, because of the tolerance of the sovereign. The result was that India remained prosperous on the old lines.

But in Europe, as in India, changes came with the advent of what is called modern civilisation. What is the particular point in that which has made such enormous differences? Three things are wanted for making wealth. One thing is land, the second thing is capital, the third thing is labour. Now in the India of the past, in the England of the past, those three things were found together. The land was held by groups of people, who lived on it, who cultivated it, who drew from it what they wanted. They sowed their food. The food harvested was eaten. The tax was only a small part of the harvest, and varied with the amount of the harvest. If the harvest was large, the villager got much and the king got much. If the harvest were small, the villager's claim came first, and until the villager was fed and had the seed for the next harvest, the king's share was diminished. That was the old rule, for on the village all depended. Hence you found widespread comfort, and there were very few people who had no share in the three—land, capital and labour. In the early West the conditions were the same. Villagers had the land. They had their accumulated savings

—capital. They had labour, by which the land was tilled and the capital increased, and so things went on and on and on for centuries; and though it is true that in England the feudal system made a change of technical ownership, the land being owned technically by the king, it never has been so in India: the king has never claimed to own the land, and where he gave a jaghir, it was the village tax and not the village itself that was given—a right to a share of the produce, not the ownership of the very means of livelihood; that is the difference between the common land system and the feudal system. Cultivation of the land was the foundation of the right to the ownership of the land for the time; the owner was not some outside person. The king had a share. Why? Because he protected the people, because he saved them from fighting, because he administered justice. The king was paid for what he did, but the land belonged to the people.

Remember that great Aryan principle when you begin your Social Reconstruction. Do not be led away by the idea that the land revenue is anything more than a tax levied by the Government on the people in exchange for the performance of certain duties. The modern English look on land as private property, but that was not the way of their Saxon forefathers, nor the Indian way: it never has been. In both countries, land, capital and labour have lately been divorced from each other. You see it more in

England, because the divorce is older, and from that divorce the poverty of England arose. England was not poor in the Middle Ages; her people were called the people of merry England. There were no slums then, no wide division between the rich and the poor. The lord in his castle had straw on the floor just as a peasant had, no carpets, no great luxury; his servants and himself dined in one great hall. The higher class of the population, the lords, the well-born people, all ate at the same table with the retainers and servants, though the food of the higher was more diversified. The result was that there was not the antagonism of class that you find now. But when the great feudal system was destroyed by Edward IV—who practically made the Barons tear each other into pieces in order that the crown might rise supreme above them all—you find the nobility of England practically destroyed in the Wars of the Roses, and the tyranny of the Tudors began.

What occurred to the land? The land which had been arable land was changed largely into pasture. It was found to pay better to lay down land in pasture, which needed little labour, and to sell the cattle, rather than keep the land arable and so need more labour. The result was that the country villages began to send their young men into the towns; they could not get a living on the land. The cattle took their place, and then arose in England the



phenomenon of the "landless men". The men without land, floating about, needed means of subsistence, and they became the "sturdy beggars," whose number and truculence gave rise to the Poor Law. Enclosure Acts in the time of the four Georges took the remaining common land away from the people. Commons after commons were taken by the Lord of the Manor: he claimed the common land, and having all the power in the House of Commons and the House of Lords, there was no trouble in passing such Acts. Only the villagers were robbed, and they were unrepresented in the so-called people's House.

Thus the landlord class became richer and richer, and the villagers became poorer and poorer; and there was one favourite song in the time of the Georges, about the way in which a man who stole the goose from off the common was punished by the law, and the villagers used to sing the question: "What ought to be the punishment of the man who steals the common from the goose?" Thus the villagers grew poorer while the landlords grew richer and richer, and less and less labour was wanted. As said, the diminution of arable land was the origin of the Poor Law in the reign of Elizabeth. Men had to live; they asked for food, and became a danger.

Lastly came the introduction of power machinery. Up till then there had been cottage industries, there had been groups of apprentices, craftsmen and master workmen, who manufactured goods for the people.

Power machinery came, and villages became factory sites, and village youths also went to new towns, round factories. Then, women and children toiled long hours for low wages, and large profits flowed into the hands of factory owners and made the capitalist class and the proletariat, or landless labouring class. Ever wider grew the gulf between the rich and poor, and human beings became "hands," belonging to owners with brains.

Long before power machinery came, England had been Protectionist, trying to monopolise profitable manufactures. You think of England as a Free Trade country, don't you? But England only became Free Trade after her own manufactures had been established by Protection. Go back to the beginning of the cotton industry in Lancashire; go back to the time of the woollen industry, when wool was manufactured in Flanders and in France, and England wanted the lion's share of manufacturing wool. What do you find her doing? You find her establishing laws against foreign imports. When Lancashire began the weaving of cloth, you were supplying all England with calicoes, cotton cloths of all kinds. Your calicoes were purchased by the womanhood of England. Lancashire wanted to clothe the English women, and so Protection was set up in England, until at last it was made penal to import Indian printed calico into England, and the purchaser, the importer and the seller all came into the grip of the

penal law. That is how your cotton industry was destroyed by Protection in England. Gradually Lancashire made more calico than the English women could wear, and more food was wanted than England could raise, and then they became Free Traders and denounced Protection. How much of this history do you know? When they tell you to imitate England in Free Trade, when you are reviving your industries, why not answer the English teachers: "You protected your nascent industries until they were strong; and you only became all Free Traders when you wanted corn, and when you had the coal, the iron which the world wanted, and when you made machinery and you wanted it to go to every country; you became Free Traders because it was advantageous to you, but you were Protectionists before." That is the answer to the English people, who blame you for requiring Protection.

As first said, with power machinery introduction arose the English factories, and gradually round factories grew up groups of men, women and children working 10, 12, 14 hours a day. Little children worked in Lancashire and Yorkshire factories in order to make wealth for the manufacturers, till they fell asleep over their work: they were beaten to keep them awake. They wore out their little fingers at the work, and were punished, until at last the misery of the children woke the conscience of England, until the "Cry

of the Children" roused the motherhood and fatherhood in happier homes, for it was told how young children in their sleep went on with the movement of the throwing of the shuttle, so that even in the few hours of sleep that were allowed, they were dreaming of the work. So, because the land was private property, and because the capital—accumulated savings made by labour—was also private property, there grew up the proletariat: labour was necessary for the land to cultivate it, necessary for the capital to create and increase it, but neither land nor capital belonged to labour, but only wages. What is wage? It is the price of labour sold in the open market, and the price becomes lower and lower and lower as the competition of the labourers with each other becomes more bitter. The labourer has nothing but himself to sell. He owns his body, he owns nothing else; his stomach, his hands, his legs are his; that stomach of his is too often empty. What can he do then but sell his hands? "Sell or starve," says the capitalist. The men starved, and then sold their hands. They were helpless—single labourers who starved. If a man is not employed, what power has he against the landlord who owns the land, and against the capitalist who owns the mill? Even if he is willing to die himself, his wife is starving, his children are starving—wage-slaves we called them in England, for verily they were slaves. These same conditions are growing up here. Your power

machinery is bringing about the same conditions here. Your Bombay slums are like the slums of England—not quite so bad or miserable, because your capitalists' hearts are not so hard, your climate not so cold ; but in every civilisation in the world to-day there is starvation at the bottom and luxury at the top. That is the difference between the older civilisation and the new. There are a few people who are very rich, and there are others who are miserably poor.

Now, every civilised Nation is built on a foundation of these miserable, uneducated, ignorant, wretched people, living in hovels not fit for cattle to be housed in. I speak of what I know in England : I have been into these places ; I have seen how these people live. Sometimes in London, when you go to the East End, you may go down to the cellar, out of the street. In the cellar you find a mother with a new-born child in one corner, lying on rags, and other children playing on the floor, and the husband comes round, stumbling down, drunken, violent, striking the miserable children and the suffering mother. These conditions are everywhere, and it is for you to prevent these conditions rising here to the pitch that they have reached in England.

In England, after a time, when the men found that they were hungry, when they found that their labour over-filled the storehouses of the owners of the mills, so that while they wanted clothes, clothes were rotting in the merchants' stores, they

began to get angry. They began to say : " Why should the very success of our labour mean that we are locked out, in order to give time for the stocks we have made being sold to others, so that we, our wives and our children, are going half-naked and starving in the cold ? " Presently, they said : " We are weak, because we are disunited ; let us join together, let us link our hands, let every workman hold the hand of other workmen in a Union, and not stand alone. We will use numbers against your wealth. By union we will become strong." Slowly there came a better time in England for skilled workmen. They struck for higher wages, and starved, and sometimes won and sometimes lost, until at last the forces grew more equal ; but still the struggle goes on, and is now threatening English industry with ruin.

Before the Unions were formed, there had been many outrages, many riots, many houses burnt down : because the young Unions were weak and could not make terms. The law was against them. The English law of conspiracy was used against the associations of labourers, a law which you could very easily twist, because if you join together and if in your association a crime is committed, the old law included all the people in the crime although they had nothing to do with it. So, against the Unions of labourers criminal law was used. The landlord spoke of them as rebellious, as seditious, as treasonable, and demanded

that the law should crush them. They had no newspapers, no one to plead for them, no members who represented them. They had only numbers. None the less, the Unions grew; none the less they became stronger and stronger, and when the merchants had a chance of big profits, when there was a great demand for goods and prices were going up, then the men struck and said: "We won't labour unless you give us a share of the profits." The merchants gave way under the pressure, and wages rose, and so things went on. When there was over-production of goods, there came the lock-out on the part of the employer to give time for sales; when there was demand for work, there came the strike on the part of the workmen. With the Reform Bill of 1867, when labour began to obtain power in the House of Commons, then the laws began to be changed, and labourers' rights recognised.

Thus grew up Trade Unions, organising labour, making it hold its own against capital, because without it capital cannot fructify. It was a condition of war, an impossible condition to go on for ever: it meant war—the great strikes in England. There was a civil war between capital and labour in 1914, as well as the danger of civil war in Ireland. That is how things have gone on in the West, and how they are: one set of people holding land, another capital, and another labour. Bring capital, labour and land together, and then we shall live in peace, and then the war between

them will be over. That is the note of Social Reconstruction in England. In the War the State has become owner for the time of many things that before belonged to individuals: the State has taken over the railways. We could not allow a company to stand between the Nation and its vital interests in carrying on a tremendous War. The railways are never likely to go back to individual ownership. For many years now, it has been realised that the State ought to be nothing more than the people acting collectively, not as a Government over against the people, but as a Government that is merely the Executive of the Nation and controlled by it. You may well hesitate to put power into the hands of a Government which is over against you, and which you do not control. But if you put power into the hands of a Government which is your creature, which you create and which you can break if you do not like it, how can such a Government tyrannise over you?

So people are beginning to realise that the true note of social reconstruction, as it affects individuals and the State, is that the State ought to be responsible to the Nation as its Government, as its Executive organ, that Government ought to do whatever is better done collectively than can be done individually. That seems to me the true note. If you can do things better united, do them united. If you can do them better individually, do them



individually. Everybody wants railways, and they should be controlled by the Government. Mines of coal, iron and other minerals are necessary for wealth. Let the Government control them, and supply the capital wanted for large enterprises; let the Government control, and appoint its men for management, but let the profits go to the people and not to the individual. That is the idea which is gradually growing up in England, and more and more that will be the rule of Social Reconstruction.

Take the children. When I was on the London School Board, I was elected by a very poor part of London—the East End. When I went to the schools there, I learned of children falling fainting on the ground. When I asked why the vitality of the children was so low, the teacher said it was only due to hunger. In that School Board I pleaded that the hungry child ought to be fed before it was educated, because to educate a hungry child is to overstrain the brain that is not able to understand what is taught for want of nourishment. They told me then: "Oh, you are pauperising the people—the parents." My answer was a very short one: "First of all, if a man and woman are not able to feed their children, they are paupers already, and you cannot make them worse by feeding their children. Even if they are bad parents, there is no reason why the children should suffer. The child is the future citizen, the backbone of the future Nation, and you

cannot allow parents to starve children, whether by inability or indifference. The children are an asset of the Nation, and they must be fed, whatever their parents may do." At that time the people did not approve it, but now they say the same thing that I said then. In England, where there is compulsory and free education, they have also free meals for every hungry child. That must work into Social Reconstruction. There ought to be no hungry child in a Nation, unless the whole Nation is starving. That is one rule that you will have to adopt. Hunger is a National crime, where general misery does not exist. If everybody is poor, then some may be hungry, but if there is too much for one man and there is one hungry child, the surplusage of the man who has too much, must feed the hungry child. That is the Law of Brotherhood. If those children were your children, would you be willing to be fed well while they were starving? They are as much your children as though they were born of your bodies. That is what the Lord Manu told you. The youngers are your children as the elders are your parents, and a love which does not go outside the family is a selfish love. The family must have the first claim upon you; but when the children of the family are supplied, you have a duty to the children outside, who are also your children, though not of the same father and mother.

That is beginning to be realised in the West. Take the municipalities in such towns as Bradford

and Birmingham, and see how child-welfare is becoming the duty of every municipality. They take care even of the unborn child. Pregnant women, the mother who is to be, in a few months, is looked after in well-managed towns; her food is attended to, her housing is attended to. If the house is too poor, she can go for the time being to a place where better comfort is provided for her. On the mother and child depends the future of the Nation. The War has taught England that, and the lesson has been learnt. The State in England is setting aside millions of pounds in order to build houses for the poor.

The poverty in England is in some ways more cruel than the poverty here. The dirt and squalor are worse, drunkenness intensifies poverty, and poverty stimulates drinking. I have been in the London streets when the public houses closed. I have seen crowds of unsexed women and brutalised men, drunken, shouting, obscene, pouring as human filth out of the drink shops. Is it right, is it just, that such extremes should exist in any country? There were women who worked twenty hours a day in order to get enough to feed their children. A member of Parliament, questioning a woman about the conditions of her labour, said to her: "How can you live on this?" "We do not live, Sir," was the answer; "we starve." Those things have to be changed. If you do not change them, whether in

England or in India, by your law and your social re-arrangement, they will be changed by revolution, as they have been changed elsewhere. There is a limit to the suffering of the people. There is a time when the misery of living is more terrible than the risk of dying, and then revolution comes. It came in France with its reign of terror. It came in Russia with its red terror there. The people are patient; they never revolt until the misery in the revolt is less than the misery in going on as they are. People do not want to go out and fight soldiers armed with bayonets and machine-guns. They only do it when they are driven to despair by the scourge of hunger and by the gnawing tooth of want. Then they go mad.

The poverty in India is very, very terrible. "Half the agricultural population"—I have often quoted it, and I saw it quoted in the Imperial Legislative Council by an official the other day—"never know what it is to have a full meal." One meal a day, and that not a full one! Is that right in a country like this, in a country where they can vote away £45 millions for the possible chance of a continued War which has come to an end? Those two things do not match: misery, starvation, on the one side, and reckless extravagance with the people's money on the other.

What ought to be the law and the social order, not the social anarchy that we have now? The law

should be in a civilised country that every child born into a Nation shall be surrounded with the conditions that enable him to develop the whole of the qualities that he has brought with him into the world. Think that over and ask if it is unjust. Surely human skill, human ability, human genius ought to be able to build a social order where that elementary condition will be realised : it is not beyond the reach of man. It existed in the past, before the enormous wealth of the present was produced by monopolies.

What should be the next step ? Every child born into the Nation should be educated—educated without cost to the parents, for the State is going to be profited by the child far more than the parents—free, compulsory education, education up to the time when the child is fit to work. Look at Mysore. Mysore has introduced free university education. If Mysore can do that, why not the British Rāj ? Why not any other Province ? Why not Bombay, Bengal and Madras Presidencies ? Is Mysore wealthier than British India, that it can afford university education free ? Mysore has the sense to understand that an educated people is a prosperous people, and that if you educate your children, your boys and your girls, your men and women become more productive, more intelligent, more useful to the State.

There are certain words used as catchwords, and one such is democracy which is sweeping over the world. They speak of liberty, equality and fraternity.

Let us take them in reverse order: Fraternity first, brotherhood first—the love of one's own neighbour. Out of that all good things must come—social spirit, social conscience, realisation that you and I have no right to be comfortable while other people are in misery and in trouble. You remember the old saying: "The tears of the weak undermine the thrones of Kings." Bhīṣhma said: "Do not fear the strong: fear the weak." In the weak lies the danger of every Nation—the hungry child, the overworked, miserable man, the half-starving woman—those are the dangers. Take care of them as your brothers and your sisters, and the foundation of Social Reconstruction is sure. Then comes equality. What do you mean by equality? If you ever think of the meaning of the catchwords, you see you cannot mean more than the equality of opportunity, because people are not born equal—I do not mean in social status but in themselves. One child is clever, and another is stupid. One child is generous, and another is miserly. One child is healthy, and another is sickly. One child is a genius, and another child is an idiot. Are they equal? You cannot alter that: it is nature and not you. What then do you mean by equality? Men are fundamentally unequal, because behind them there are different experiences, because one has been in this cycle of humanity many more ages than another. Some came into human life much longer ago than

others, and are therefore better, more highly gifted, have greater present possibilities. All that you can do in your society is to arrange it so as to make as far as possible equality of opportunity for every child born into the world—no artificial disadvantages, no artificial clogs, but an open way wherein all men may walk, where all may find both labour and enjoyment. The difference between people is really the difference in the power to grasp opportunities when they come. There is where the fundamental inequality lies, and that you cannot touch. One man seizes an opportunity and goes forward, and another hesitates so long that the opportunity goes to the other end of the place before he makes up his mind to catch at it. Give them all a chance. That, you can do. And the next rule is—and it may sound to you very strange—that the more unpleasant the work, the more disagreeable the task, the more unskilled, the better it should be paid, and the shorter should be its hours. I am afraid that that sounds very upside down, because in our present system, the pleasanter the work, the more you pay for it. That is just the wrong way. The old Hindū law spoke of three great objects of human life : wealth, honour, power. Those who have least of honour and power and least ability, should have more wealth. If a man is a statesman in a great country, guiding his Nation with the joy of using widespread power for good, he does not want much money to recompense him. Give him a small

salary. Why should he have a large one? But the poor man, whose work is deadening and uninteresting, whose hours are long, the conditions of whose work are dirty and mechanical—give him short hours that he may not be deadened; give him a good salary so that he shall have leisure, and may use that leisure to cultivate his mind that otherwise would be stupified, so that he may become a man and not a mere machine. That is the just rule, and that is the ancient Indian rule of the three rewards, that some day may come back to this anarchical modern civilisation. It is the rule of the jungle not the rule of the family that “those shall take who have power, and those shall keep who can”. The system we have gives the three rewards to the same man, and crushes our brothers to increase the wealth of the few.

I plead for Social Reconstruction on the basis of the family, and that is that the weakest shall be most cared for, that the baby shall have the least toil and the most amusement. It was put into a splendid sentence by a French Socialist: “From every man according to his ability; to every man according to his needs.” That is the true rule of human society.

If you have the power of art, if you are a great master of sculpture, your work is a delight to you and brings you honour. Why then should you have wealth showered upon you in addition, when your work is a joy to which you go with delight?



But, if you had to look after the sanitary arrangements of a town, that would be unpleasant, disagreeable work, with filthy conditions. Should you not have time to remember that you are a human being, to avail yourself of opportunities to cultivate your mind, your emotions, your artistic faculties? Should you be imprisoned in the sewer because you are asked to clean it for the benefit of your fellow townsmen? We need to change our ideas, we need to reverse our standpoints. On the basis then of brotherhood, on the ancient basis of the family, and the laws of the family life, should the State, the Society, be rebuilt—love instead of distrust and hatred. Think of the real justice which asks from the weak very little and asks from the strong the best that he can give. A great word was spoken by the Christ. "Let him that is the greatest among you be as your servant." That is a true and ancient moral maxim, that every great Prophet has declared. Take the Lord Muhammad, the great Prophet of Arabia. Was He wealthy because He was mighty? Was He rich, because His people would go through torture for His sake, and when daunted, in uttermost anguish, a disciple declared that he would rather suffer any torture "than that the Prophet should be pierced by a single thorn"? How did He live? When a man came expecting to see magnificence and splendour, he found the Prophet mending His own

old shoes. That is true democracy. Wisdom has authority: it need not have wealth. Was He the less great and powerful because He was mending His worn-out shoes? Would He have been greater with a crown on His head, with servants round Him to minister to His wants? His power was in His wisdom, because He knew more than His people. His authority was the authority of the wise, and not of wealth, and therefore is Islām mighty because it is founded on truth.

And so it has been with every great Teacher. I took that one name because it came first into my mind, but every great Teacher has done the same. Christ was a carpenter. S. Paul was a tent-maker. The R̥shi of old had nothing save his wisdom, and I would ask you to think whether our modern society should not have something of that ancient thought, that we may have a democracy in which the poorest shall be educated, and that we should no longer build on the vast mass of human misery that we trample into the dirt because it is not able to resist. Such preaching of the Law of Brotherhood means social justice. A Nation cannot prosper where the masses of its people are miserably poor.

I have been dealing only with these large questions of Social Reconstruction. Every Nation has also its own special questions. But these large ones are common to all. For these the Theosophical Society should stand, for they are based on Brotherhood, on

Reincarnation and on Karma. They recognise the difference between human beings, not in their essence but in their age in evolution, the stage which they have reached; and they say that as a man advances, he should become more and more the servant of all. You have at the base of the old Hindū social system the Shūdra—the servant. You have at its head the Sannyāsī, the Saint, the Teacher, but the supreme Servant of the Nation. Shrī Kṛṣṇa said of Himself: "There is nothing in this world nor in any other that I have to gain, but if I did not continue the whole world would fall into confusion." And so He said: "Let the wise man, working with Me, render all action attractive." That is true evolution. You serve while you are unevolved, in order that you may gain. You serve when you are highly evolved, in order that others may profit by the service; but service is ever the law of life. Service, the Nation has a right to; service, the family has a right to; service, the community has a right to, and service, humanity has a right to; that is the service of all, which engages Those who are superhuman, and who work for the whole world without reward. Let us then in brotherly affection, remembering the great laws of Brotherhood. Reincarnation and Karma, endeavour so to shape Reconstruction here, that India may rise again to be what she should be among Nations. She cannot bring back exactly the old system. She cannot revive all the old customs or all the same laws, but

the same truths are hers. Apply those in a manner suited to the time. That is the duty of every Theosophist who is sincerely desirous of the National good.

I will ask you, in looking at this large area that I have imperfectly striven to cover to-day, to bring out the great principles of Social Reconstruction, to try to apply them in your own country for your own people, remembering the happiness of the people and the good of the people. That is the object of all good men. So shall India rise again to be what she was in her most spiritual days—happy, prosperous, wealthy, well ordered, based on the family. So shall we serve our time and generation well, and leave a better world for our children.

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## LECTURE III

### POLITICAL RECONSTRUCTION

FRIENDS :

I shall speak to you, as you might expect, on what I have called Political Reconstruction—as in the previous lectures—from the larger standpoint, the object of these lectures being to help you to the grasping of certain great principles found by a study of human history and based on human experience. There is so much detail spoken of, that people are apt to lose sight of those great natural principles on which all certain reconstruction must be based. Every country individually must deal with its own details, because in every country the customs and institutions are different, and therefore the changes that are wanted must also be different in those various countries. Here, for instance, as an inheritance from the past, you have what is known as the caste system. In the West, coming down from feudal times, you have a class system, in some respects more rigid, or as rigid, as the caste system here ; in other respects it is far more liberal, but less brotherly than the caste system ;

but, for individuals, it offers greater opportunities for rising socially than are offered in the caste system. Hence, for a very energetic man, a man of great intellectual power, a man of strong will, of strong character, the individualistic system of the West gives better opportunity for such rising, and one here and one there of the poorer classes finds his way to the top. Here, you have on the whole a larger average of equality, but a more difficult barrier to cross for the most energetic, the most strong in will and character. In the old days here the two were combined. You had a certain order in society, but men were able to pass from one caste to another, if the caste of their birth did not answer to the caste denoted by their qualities. There you had a very very perfect system, combining social order and individual advancement. But in the present day, caste has become so artificial, so unconnected with the real character of the individual, that it has grown into a great obstruction, instead of maintaining an ordered society.

Now, I want, if I can, to see what the general progress of mankind has been, and how the different polities of the Nations have either justified themselves or been swept away. Naturally, we must look for the older polities in the East, and also in certain parts of Arabia and of Africa. In Asia, outside India, you had great Empires before the time of the Aryan race, essentially based on slavery. Those

have passed away: the institution of slavery, which makes one man the property of another man, has passed away, I hope for ever. Slave Empires, Nations where slavery was an essential part of the body politic, have disappeared. The last of them was the great Republic of the West—the United States of America—where the slave system in the South was the last organised expression of slavery among civilised Nations. That, as you know, perished in the great American Civil War, and by the blood of the people that stain was washed away from the West.

Before that, there had been the abolition of slavery in some Colonies of Great Britain; it was abolished there in a very noble way, which gave Britain a good National Karma, and explains the way in which she has risen to power; for in that case alone, as far as I know, the Nation admitted that a Karma created collectively ought not to fall upon only one class of the Nation, that where the whole Nation had sanctioned slavery it was not right, in abolishing it, to allow the burden of the loss to fall only on the actual slave-holding class. So, this Nation, in abolishing slavery under its flag, compensated the slave-holding class, not because compensation as such is necessary in abolishing a criminal condition, but because by the payment of the compensation the people in England, who had sanctioned the crime, showed their own sense of wrong by giving money from their own

pockets in order that one class alone might not be ruined, where the whole Nation was guilty. There you had a splendid example: it is unique and it is really that which has largely made the power of England. For Karma works justly among Nations as well as with individuals, and those who take their share in the expiation of a National Karma, raise their Nation and give it power in the world.

In the older Empires, slavery was not abolished, but abolished them. For that which is against Human Brotherhood cannot last. In the old Babylon, in the old Assyria, the system of slavery perished with the Empires. In every one of them, slavery was the basis on which the commonwealth was built up. You may read in any ancient book how the slave was the mere chattel of the owner, how men and women were at the mercy of their owners. But when you glance at ancient India, while you do find slavery to a very small extent, it was a slavery, as you may see in the laws of the country, that was carefully guarded; the laws were merciful, they protected the slave. I know it is true that Megasthenes, a Greek Ambassador in the Court of Chandragupta, said that there was no slavery in India. It is true that no Āryan was a slave, but some of the earlier inhabitants of the country conquered by the Āryans were enslaved, although, as I said, in a form so comparatively gentle that to a



Greek coming from Greek slavery it seemed to him that there was no slavery at all.

You know that in chattel slavery it is the lot of the woman which is the worst : she is at the mercy of the owner ; she may lose her honour ; she may be made a mother against her will ; but according to the Indian law, if a woman was seduced by her owner, then she and the child born of her were both set free. There comes in the great difference between India and other countries contemporary with her ; a feeling, a recognition of duty there, even to a slave. A dishonoured woman was given freedom as amends for the wrong done to her, and her child was born free instead of being born a slave. It is worth remembering that, because it shows the level of civilisation in that ancient India.

Going back before that thoroughly organised time, we find the polity of the State based, as I said yesterday, on the family. In the earlier civilisations there is one remarkable fact which is recognised in history. You never find in history the beginning of an old civilisation. You find it, as a great Frenchman said of Egypt, springing on the stage of history full-grown. History has never explained that—I mean the history of the West. The histories of the East have told us much of the early days of civilisation, and they all show us a single picture. Whether you take India, whether you take Egypt, whether you take the traditions of the ancient countries in

America, like Mexico or Peru, you find in all of them one type of polity. You find that they are ruled by a King who is different in quality, in advancement, to the people over whom he rules. Infant humanity, the masses of men—they are like children. The King is a divine, or semi-divine Being, who rules over them, who teaches them, who guides them, and He is surrounded by other men, highly advanced men, that you speak of here as R̥shis, that others speak of as Prophets, a group of men headed by a Monarch, who is head and shoulders above his people. He it is who gives them their early knowledge, he who teaches them architecture, who teaches them irrigation, who teaches them all the foundations of what we call a civilised State. Egypt tells you of divine dynasties. Peru tells you the same, and from every ancient story you hear the same thing. You have here Shrī Rāmachandra, who is looked on as an Avatāra of God Himself; everywhere a Man surrounded by a few others, who founds a civilisation that the people carry out under his direction. That is characteristic. Humanity is in the infant stage: humanity is a mass of children, obedient, loving, reverent, looking up to the King as their father and following his directions. Ruins of these are left in the ancient pyramids of Egypt, in the great temples whose ruins are still there. They tell us of enormous power and wisdom, and their application to the affairs of human life.

Everywhere this is seen, everywhere the remains are left. There you have the conception of a child-Nation ruled over by Elders, by men who are God-illuminated. Under those conditions, under that state of affairs, the Nations were naturally prosperous. Knowledge and power were regarded as giving responsibility and binding to service.

Consider China, one of the oldest civilisations. You find there, as you find in other countries, that there was sometimes difficulty in finding a ruler: the duties were so heavy, the responsibilities were so great, that no man coveted the office of governing the people; for if the people suffered, the ruler was blamed; if there were famines or plague, the ruler was condemned. Take that very plain statement of the Chinese Confucius: when the King asked: "Why are there robbers in my land?" the answer was: "If you, O King, did not rob, there would be no robbers in your land." That responsibility was carried out very rigidly. Look at the old laws of Manu. Supposing a man had something stolen from him, what is the law? The treasury of the King paid fourfold the value of the goods that were stolen. "What is the good of a King," the people said, "if when we pay him to protect us, a thief may come and take our goods?" They were practical people in those old days. The Nation was growing out of childhood into youth, and began to recognise the duty of the King to them, as

well as their duty to the monarch; the duty of the King was to keep order, to protect, so that the poor man, who paid a tax to the King for his protection, might live uninjured. If the poor man was injured, his appeal was to the monarch, and the monarch was bound to make good fourfold anything that he had lost by theft. Looking over the polity of these, then, we find certain general principles: The land must be cultivated by the masses of the people. One way of arranging it, followed in ancient Peru, was that the land should be divided into three parts, one part to belong to the people, the second part to the priesthood, the third part to the King and the nobles. The King and the nobles had their lands cultivated for them. In exchange, they devoted themselves to the welfare of the people. The priesthood had their lands cultivated for them, and in exchange they taught the people: education was free; they had to maintain schools. Also they had to doctor and nurse the people, to maintain those beyond the age for work, as well as to serve the temples. The chief care was the benefit of the people. People did not work as children. They did not work as elderly men. Out of the land of the priests came the support of the child, the support of the elder, and only the man in the vigour of his manhood had to labour for the benefit of all. Then, when the question came of anything that ran short—sometimes the seed was short, sometimes water was short—how should the

smaller amount be distributed? First, the land of the people must be supplied: they are the strength of the State. If seed be short, sow their land first; then, the land used for charity in the hands of the priests; and lastly, the land of the King and of the nobles. If water was short, the rule of distribution was the same: Water first the land of the people who cultivate for us all; then the land of the priests used for charity, and last of all the land of the King and of the nobles. You see the principle. Those who are the most helpless, those on whom the prosperity of the State depends, they are first to be looked after when trouble arises. The defence of the country is with the King and with the nobles. Education, medical care, the care of the aged and of the helpless, that is in the hands of the religions. The lands are the suppliers of the necessities of life to all; therefore on them the greatest care must be bestowed. That was the old principle.

Coming down from the days of the Divine Kings, humanity began, as just said, to grow, became the youth instead of the child. As in the case of all youths, experiments were very largely tried, experiments of all forms of polity, mostly based, in the East, on the theory of the family. One great difference arose between the family in the East and the family in the middle West. Take the Roman family as the type. You had here in India the joint family system; the father was the head of the household,

and his word was law. But as children grew up they changed their position to the father; loving, reverent always they were, but, said the proverb, after the age of sixteen, the son should be treated as a friend; that is to say, as the younger ones grew up, they became the counsellors of the head of the household, their voice was listened to, and though the decision of the father was final, it was made after consultation with the others; not only so, but he was the trustee of the family property, not the absolute owner. If he abused the management of the estate, the law stepped in on the appeal of the family. He must administer it well; he must not be wasteful, extravagant, careless, thriftless. He was a trustee rather than an owner, and the family property was in trust with him. He was responsible to posterity for the use of it, and his ancestors handed it down to him as a family trust. Out of that type comes the position of the King. The monarch in India was not, as most Western people think—bringing their traditions here with them—an absolute monarch. He was surrounded by a Council. Just as the father was trustee of the family, the sons having a right of consultation with him, so the King was trustee for the Nation and a Council surrounded him. Read the old stories and you will find that where the Government was not Republican—as it very often was—the Government was what you would now call a limited

monarchy. You find that royal decrees were signed by Ministers as well as by the King. Look at three or four centuries before Christ; the seal of the minister had to be added to the seal of the King before an order was valid. Go to the eighth century after Christ, the date of a very valuable book called *Sukranīṭī*, and you may read the formula with which each minister signed the decree. The great minister Kauṭilya, in the fourth century B.C., said that you could not have a vehicle running on one wheel, and you could not have a King without ministers. It is worth while remembering these things, when you are talking of the changes of polity at the present time. I am mentioning them to guide you, as being of practical use in the present, because in your education you are not taught the history of your own country and so you are handicapped. You know the history of Greece, the history of Rome, the history of England, but you do not know the history of India. People take advantage of your ignorance, as when a Judge comes here and, in a preface to his Report, says that before the British came here, India had known nothing but absolute monarchy. Why do you not learn your own history and have your children educated in a right way? There were self-willed Kings here as elsewhere, but you will find in *Manu* and in the *Artha Shāstra* lists of Kings who were deposed, who were put to death, because they ruled their country badly. It would

be useful to remember these things, when you are considering reforms at the present time. There were plenty of experiments: experiments are naturally the amusements of the youth, and the country then was youthful.

When you come to look at Europe, you find there that their polity was based not on the family as in India but on the family as in Rome. A Roman father was the owner of the family; he had the power of life and death over his children. A word of the father could send the son to death: he was the absolute monarch of the family. Out of that grew the despotisms of Europe, quite different from what they call the despotism of the East. Out of the Roman family came the absolute monarch; out of the Roman family, the absolute Emperor; and when the Western people came here, and found Kings and Emperors, they brought their own ideas of an absolute monarchy; and as the atmosphere of the East was full of fine phrases, full of gentle courtesy, full of expressions of gratitude, those Western people did not understand that the phrases were of the lips, not of exact fact. Take an Eastern gentleman to-day, and even now, when you go into his house he says: "The house is yours," and it would be a surprise if you took the phrase as of absolute literal meaning. It is a kindly, gentle phrase which means: "I want to make you happy and comfortable, as in your own home." His very gracious and very kindly words



make you feel at once that you are among friends and not strangers; and so one who lives in a palace says to another: "Come to my poor cottage." Everything of the other man is talked of as splendid, and everything of the speaker is talked of as poor.

That is all the habit of kindness, putting itself into these fine phrases. But the English people took it literally. They thought that Indian Rulers, so profusely complimented, were the same kind of absolute monarchs as their own Kings and Emperors, and that the people were slaves: much misunderstanding, not intentional, but really misunderstanding.

With all these things behind you in the Nations, how do we find the next change coming? You had a polity in Europe of feudalism—the King with his Barons. He takes possession of the land, and he gives it to his great nobles. The people are deprived. And so, as I put it to you yesterday, you have growing wealth and growing poverty, until the poverty becomes intolerable. Then we find changes gradually coming about. The masses of the people, finding themselves poor, demand political power. It is said here so often that you must have education before political power, that you want Trade Unionism; Trade Unionism in the West is a movement for concerted action in politics as well as in trade. Of course they all are necessary. Education is training the future citizen, and it must be on the lines that make a good citizen of the State. But you will not

get education till you have political power. Trade Unionism could do little by itself, because the power of the law is in the hands of the law-makers, and until the people make the makers of the laws, they have no power to alter their conditions.

Then had to come the great strife between Individualism and what is called Socialism. But that was preceded, as you know, by a curbing of the power of the King. In the great struggle of the English Commonwealth where the Parliament and King fought, the one against the other, the Parliamentary army conquered the royal army, and finally the Parliamentary army charged the King with treason, and he was tried for treason to the Nation, instead of the old way of trying people for treason to the King; and he was judged for that, and, as you know, they executed him. Then his son came back, and then another son, whom they drove into exile. Having grown by then too wise to execute the King, they simply sent him away. Then came William and Mary, and the contract between King and people: "You shall not do this or that. You shall not touch without law our persons, our property. We are yours as subjects, only as subjects under the law, and you must not interfere with the administration of the law." So came the constitutional monarchy of Great Britain. Under that, owing to the conditions I mentioned yesterday—the driving of people off the land, the bringing of power-machinery—the poverty

of the people and their helplessness increased, and then came Trade Unionism. But in England one of the great objects of Trade Unionism was so to mass the workers together that they might have their elected members in Parliament. I remember the days of the great struggle when the miners became enormously powerful by their great Trade Unions, and their one cry was: "Give us the franchise, and we will be able to improve our own conditions. Without that we cannot improve them." Voluntary effort cannot do it. The question is too large. As long as land and capital are in the hands of two classes, and labour in the hands of a third class, there must be struggle, and if the people are awakened, for them must come political power.

So these miners went to Parliament, and agricultural labourers sent an agricultural representative to Parliament—one man only of their class who spoke for them in Parliament, and then the laws began to be changed. Then the burden of oppressive laws was lifted from the shoulders of the people.

For the tremendous movement which gave the Reform Bill of 1867, placed the balance of power in the hands of the multitude of the people. Household suffrage became the rule. As Robert Lowe said, when that Bill was passed, which they said was going to destroy England—which was called a revolutionary measure, a cataclysm, a catastrophe, by the House of Lords—"we, must educate our masters". The people had become

the masters. They were ignorant, illiterate as well as poor, and one of the first results of that great victory of the people was the Education Bill of 1870, which brought in the possibility of education for every child born in the land. Then education was made free and compulsory, until to-day six millions of children are in the Schools of England and Wales—one-sixth of their total population. That only came when political power was in the hands of the people.

Make no mistake. No class legislation will ever lift up the masses of the people to the happy position that they ought to occupy. It is not good that there should not be representatives of every class in the People's House. If you have no one but the poor, then you have class legislation for the poor, and that in its turn is bad. Australia has suffered and is suffering from it, because there the power is in the hands of the working population, and they pass laws unfair to the professional and landed classes, as those had passed laws which were unfair to the poor when they had grip of political power. All should be represented and there should be no disadvantage to any class. In that, England has been exceptionally fortunate. She broadened her suffrage stage by stage, and so she has now reached a practically universal suffrage.

You cannot wisely jump into that at once, as Australia did. You would then have, as I said, class legislation over again. But if, using the experience of

others, you first widen your suffrage very much, leaving the way open to successive widenings of the suffrage, you will then tread the true path to liberty. After all this political turmoil came Individualism and Socialism, as I said. First Individualism triumphed. "Let things go and let all men struggle, and let the best man come to the top." That has been the condition of Western countries now for many years. It means social anarchy, as well as political anarchy. We need more order, and that can only come through a wise use of political power.

The world has passed through experiments, many and varied. We have had autocrats; we have had aristocrats. Now a change is coming: we are to have that which is called Democracy, the rule of the people; but Democracy has not yet found its feet. It does not yet realise itself, it has not yet discovered the best methods of choosing its Executive. What ought Democracy to be? The choosing out of the wisest, the choosing out of the best, and placing them as the Executive to the legislative part of Government. It is too late now to choose by favour. It is too late now to choose by birth. It is too late now to choose by wealth. America has tried wealth as a standard, and the result was, until lately, the driving out of the service of the Nation the very best men. It had become a sordid struggle for political power.

The method of choosing the best is not yet discovered. We have to realise that the only real

authority to which a man should bow is the authority of wisdom, and it should guide service. That is what is wanted. Otherwise how will you organise your Nation? Your most ignorant people cannot organise it. The weakness of the working manual class to-day is that while it can labour, it cannot direct labour; while it can work, it cannot guide the workers. It does not know how to organise; it does not understand the question of international relationships. It does not realise how the Nations are bound together by their trade, their commerce, their industry, and it only sees things that are near it. It does not see things that are yet remote. And therefore in England productive co-operation has been a failure, and not a success like distributive co-operation. There lies the difficulty. There are plenty of miners, but no co-operative mines have yet succeeded: the workers tend to be jealous and suspicious of each other. They do not like to submit to the authority of one of themselves; yet such submission is necessary for production, and so every effort in that direction has so far failed.

What then is the only way at present of correcting this? It is by organising labour and by organising capital, as they have tried to do in the great Trusts of America, but by organising them in one body, under the State. In the American Trust the men who make the combination divide among themselves the wealth produced by hundreds or

thousands of labourers, and so a terrible oppression arises. If instead of a Trust, with its individualistic profits, you had those same men of ability, of organising skill, employed by the Nation as servants of the Nation, and paid them a good salary, because their qualities are at present rare, the profits would go to the Nation and not to a group of individuals. It is along that line that the redemption of the Nation from poverty will come.

The rule is what I gave yesterday, *viz.*, that the Nation should do collectively everything that can be better done collectively than individually.

There are many schools of Socialism. Some of them are so rigid that they look like a new despotism. You have to combine the organisation of Socialism with the originality and joy of Liberty. Until you have united the two, you cannot succeed. Liberty is wanted for the individual, otherwise he cannot grow. One autocrat or many autocrats are equally a tyranny and hinder the growth of the majority, the masses of the people. You want liberty for individual development, liberty to follow your own nature, your own thought, your own temperament, without injuring your neighbour's mind, or your neighbour's temperament, or your neighbour's liberty.

Then comes the difficulty. How far is control to go? If you go too far, you destroy originality. The value of a Nation is in its variety, and if you crush it all into one mould, you take away the very value of

the National life. Some of the forms of Socialism would really destroy individuality. There lies the danger. But if you limited it in the way I put, if you make your State and your Nation conterminous, if your Government is only the Executive of the legislative and judicial power of the Nation, chosen by the Nation, rejected by the Nation if it does not do well, strengthened by the Nation while it goes along the right lines, not a Government for the Nation, but a Nation carrying out its will through the Government—that, it seems to me, is the true line of progress.

You will find many of the past generation who put Government over against the Nation. “The more a Government does, the less is the sphere of liberty.” That was the school which ruled English life in the last century. Now there comes a higher idea, that the Government should consist of the most capable, the most serviceable, the most self-sacrificing, the most wise, who should carry out for the Nation that which the Nation desires. Then the Government will not be a restriction on liberty, but an expression of liberty, the hands whereby work is done, that which a man wills to do.

Such should be our body politic, a body in which every adult—not under punishment for crime or incapacitated physically—should have a voice in the making of the legislative body: the legislative body having its ministry, its Executive representing



the majority in the legislature, responsible to it, accountable to it, created by it, broken by it.

That is not perfect, because it is still the will of the majority; it is not the will of the whole Nation. Therefore, you want to devise a plan gradually, in which minorities will have their fair representation also—some form of what is called proportional representation. In England to-day, if you have one thousand electors, 501 on one side and 499 on the other, then the majority of two has the whole law-making power in its hands, and that is manifestly unfair. That is one step towards fairness, but gradually and slowly we shall devise plans, or our children and grandchildren will devise them, which will make representation more and more complete, and gradually the will of the whole shall be represented through the members in the Parliament of the people.

That is our ideal. It is that towards which we strive, and the bringing back of the old idea that power means duty, and greatness the service of all. That is the social idea, *viz.*, the recognition of the Nation as a whole, in which the oldest and the strongest take most of the burdens, and the children have none till they grow into manhood and then begin to share the burdens while their children are protected. Such a great ideal we shall put before ourselves in Political Reconstruction: to seek always to find out our best men, and then to let them

have power, keeping always the power to dismiss them if they abuse the trust put in them, and to place others in their stead.

I believe that Democracy will walk along that way. At present it is headlong, sometimes foolish and unfair, too easily swayed. Its faults must be corrected by a better and better education and an unfolding spirituality. More and more you must make education the business of youth, and not place on the youth the duty of bread-winning, which must be on those men and women who are in the plenitude of their strength. True Democracy, to be beneficial, must be an educated Democracy, a religious Democracy. Then and then alone, the real assent of the people will go hand in hand with the translation of the National will into action.

Just in proportion as we realise that rule means service, that power means duty, that strength is to be used to uplift and not to trample down, so soon only shall we reach a form of Government worthy of men. I believe that we shall organise more than we organise to-day, that the State, like the human body, will have organs for the performance of the various kinds of work. You will have your commercial organ, your industrial organ, your legal organ, all functions of the State carried out by the men best adapted to discharge them. Out of the old caste system, you will take that idea of organisation, but you will not make it

depend only on birth, but let the young go freely along the inner prompting of their noblest and most useful tendencies, and find their place in the organ for which their capacities best fit them. Then you will not be struggling with each other but co-operating, not fighting with each other but working harmoniously for the Common Good. In a highly organised body, you do not do everything with every part of it; you use your brains for thinking, you use your feet for walking, you use your stomach for digesting, you use your lungs for breathing. You do not want to breathe with your heart, and you do not want to walk with your stomach. Such is a true picture of the State; the wisest form the brain; the strongest form the hands and arms. The great masses of the people are those who bring the food to be digested by the stomach. An organisation is good, provided it is not oppressive, and provided that the organisation of the whole recognises the variety of the parts and lets each man go to the organ that suits him best. The painter takes joy in his painting, the musician takes joy in his music; you do not drive him to it, his work is his delight; and perfect will be an organisation when each man and woman does the thing he or she likes best. Labour will become a delight instead of a drudgery. You enjoy your game, because you do it willingly. The secret of good labour is freedom to choose, the choice directed by the temperament

and the faculty of the chooser. So shall the Nation grow into ordered freedom ; so shall it progress into general prosperity ; and all the time that this is going on, you will have the greater and greater development of the divine Spirit within, which will transform the necessity of an outer law of compulsion into the inner law of freedom which comes from the Ruler Immortal within the heart. God in man will become the only authority. The outer law will cease to be necessary, when the law within, which makes for good, takes the place of the compulsion of the law without. Then we shall have real freedom, then shall man attain that last attribute of divinity, of the Will self-determined to Good, self-determined to Service. Then the outer law will gradually diminish, because the inner law will take its place, and we shall find the truth of the old statement that Love is the fulfilling of the law.

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## LECTURE IV

### EDUCATIONAL RECONSTRUCTION

FRIENDS :

I want if I can to put before you this morning very plainly what is meant by National Education ; what is its object ; what should be its methods ; and how far in dealing with the question we have to consider the heads under which that Education can be divided. Education is one of the burning problems of the present day, and especially here in India, where there is a hope that its control may be transferred to the control of the Legislative Councils and Indian Ministers.

The object of Education in every Nation is much the same, and its importance was recognised very definitely even in the midst of the turmoil and tumult of the War. In England, the very centre of the struggle, Education was a subject that engaged the attention of Parliament, and was especially dealt with in a Bill that has gone far beyond any educational measure which had ever before been passed in that country. So vital is the question, so essential to the right development of the life of a Nation, that no

other subject can be alleged to be more important than this.

In Great Britain the object of Education, as the object is everywhere, is to shape the child in such a way, to develop his capacities, to encourage him and guide his growth, so that he may become a good citizen, valuable to the Nation. The object of Education is to develop to the full, every quality that a child brings with him into the world; to give him opportunities which will enable the qualities within him to grow, to develop, and to find their full evolution, so that those qualities in germ in the child may blossom into the flower of a noble manhood or womanhood. Education is not to fill his memory with facts, as if he were an empty bucket. These he can at any time find in books of reference which he can have on the shelf of his library. Education should give him the touchstone of reason; the ability to meet difficulties in life; the power to adapt himself, to fit himself to meet emergencies with courage and initiative; to be able to mould circumstances, and not only be moulded by them, as if he were a piece of clay in the hands of the potter.

The child is a living spiritual intelligence, with an immemorial past behind him, and an incalculable future stretching in front of him. He is not a new-comer on our globe; not for the first time does he come into this world through the gateway of birth. Every

time that he returns, he brings with him the harvests of the past, of past struggles and past defeats and past victories; and the difference between child and child, which shows itself even in infancy, is the difference of the evolution that lies behind them, and the consequent possibilities of the future that lies in front. Thus should you regard the child that comes into your hands to be educated, to be helped to make the best of himself. The parent, the teacher, is to discover the best way in which to educate the child. He is not a white, empty sheet on which you can write just what you please. He is a living being, reacting to your touch according to the nature he has created in his past.

In the West, where reincarnation is not yet generally accepted—although it is now making its way as the only rational hypothesis, without which the problems of life, and therefore of education, cannot be solved—scientific men have had to make up for the want of a full and true theory by the principle of heredity. They admit, as we do who believe in reincarnation, that the child is not really a new-comer, since he inherits the past of his Nation, since he inherits the past of his fellow men; he inherits all the past of his ancestors, of his race, and is the result of the individual and the collective past of which he is the heir. Now I do not want to discuss here these two theories of reincarnation and heredity. The result of both, on the point with which we are concerned,

is, that you have a child with inborn faculties, with characteristics inherent in him, however he may have come by them, whether due to his own experience or to his ancestry, and you, the educator, must recognise these individual peculiarities, if you are to educate him aright.

In ancient times the teacher taught that which the State considered it was necessary for its future citizens to learn. That was the practice in the East as well as in the West. Systems of education were framed to suit the politics of States, and the child had to conform to the particular system. Among the Greeks there was a fable about one Procrustes, who might have been a schoolmaster, for when he got hold of a man, he placed him on a bed of iron, and chopped him shorter if the man were too long, and if he were too short he pulled him out so as to make him longer. Systems of education based on this method have been in the past and still exist, but it is recognised more widely now in the West that you must understand your child before you can teach him. You must find out what the child wants to know, and what his capacities fit him to learn, and remove the incapacities if he has any. You must recognise that education in the East must be based on the law of Reincarnation and the law of Karma, as in the West a similar course is followed on the scientific basis of collective heredity.



Our object is to make out of the child the citizen that the Nation wants. He is to live in the family, in the community, in the province, in the Nation which has relations with other Nations—and thus international relations appear. He is to be made fit for his duty towards the whole of these; and the object of education is to make him as fit as his nature will allow, to make the best of what there is in him. You must take him as he is; he may be poor, he may be rich; he may be brilliant, he may be dull; he may be a genius, he may be a dolt; you must find out what he has, and utilise that to the very utmost of service; suit yourself to him, understand him, find out his tastes, find out his capacities, and frame your system of Education to fit the child, but do not force the child into a system which does not fit him.

The object of training a child, then, is to make him a citizen, the best citizen possible. Out of that comes the necessary conclusion that if the child is to be a citizen of a particular Nation, as every child must be, then the education of the future citizens must be in the hands of the people of the Nation to which the child belongs. According to an English newspaper every good citizen must be patriotic; there can be no good citizen without patriotism; a citizen must be filled with the love of his country; he must feel his rights and be conscious of his duties in the land to which he belongs. It is for this reason,

above all, that suitable Education can only be given by the people of the Nation to the children of the Nation. You may have foreign teachers for foreign subjects; you may have a French teacher for French, or an American teacher for special lines of mechanical and other training; but the bulk of the teachers and the direction of Education must be of the Nation itself and in its hands. You must have the Statesman, the Politician, the Merchant, the Lawyer, the Doctor, trained to be the citizens of your own country, and not of foreign lands. That is essential.

The difficulty is that, in this country, our two great systems of Education are non-National, the one the Government system, the other the Missionary. Now the Government system is far better than the Missionary, because it leaves religion alone. It is far better to teach the Hindū, the Musalmān, the Sikh, the Jain child, no religion at all, than to teach him a foreign religion, which is not that of his home. The teaching of a child in a missionary school means the repressing of the Spirit of a child, the sterilising of the heart. It does not often make him a Christian. He is not a Christian because he has been brought up in a missionary school, but the teaching does definitely make him irreligious to a certain extent, for his teachers deny any other religion than their own, and their own is not the religion of his parents, of his friends. In the missionary school the Spirit of the child is repressed.

This is visible in the attitude of a missionary, who complained to me that the Hindū child was unresponsive to religious influence—meaning, of course, the Christian religious influence, forgetting that the whole life of the Hindū boy is steeped in a non-Christian religion, and that the home and the school are in conflict.

As a matter of fact, Religion in the East is the very strongest of influences, and the one to which boys most swiftly respond. I worked in the Central Hindū College, and know the educational system of this country; it has been familiar to me during the last twenty-six years. I have found that the minds of the boys with whom I have come into contact are full of religious feelings and thoughts, and they most readily respond to guidance because of this. But it must reach them in the garb of their own Faith. So in the Central Hindū College we were able to do almost without punishments. Gentle words readily influence the Indian lad. Thus the boys grow up bright, outspoken, fearing nothing, because they have found their teachers trustworthy and worthy also of love and reverence. The Government School has no religious teaching. It cannot have. The people who teach are most of them English, and all the superior posts are filled by the English. They are Christians. They cannot teach our religion, they must not teach their own. This one defect in the Government system of course makes it incomplete, unsatisfactory. There can be no

thorough teaching of Indian tradition, of Indian custom, of Indian History, of everything, in fact, that makes a boy love and honour his native land. There is an atmosphere in every Government school of at the most a good-natured toleration of things Indian. Their inferiority is taken for granted. The child lacks the education, the training, which makes him instinctively love his country, feel pride in it, and joyously do his duty to the country which gave him birth. It is marvellous to me that, through all these generations, love of the country and of the religion has remained so strong, that even this officialised education has not availed to crush it out.

How much of the History of your own country, how much of her splendid past, how much of the possibilities which lie within you, her children, are known to you who have been educated in Government schools? Now an essential part of education lies in the right teaching of Indian History, the history of your own country. What India can do entirely depends on what India has done in the past—as Seeley said of England. Once an Indian said to me that irrigation was one of the great blessings of British Rule. Was that so? “I think there was much more irrigation in the country under the Hindū and Musalmān kings,” said I. “Surely not,” he said. My answer was one instance; study Tanjore, and you will find that the great channels of irrigation were made in the ninth and tenth centuries, under Indian rulers, and that

the British have not needed to do much except dig some smaller channels and repair old ones. Read Mr. Montagu's Report, or the Rowlatt Report, and you will see how little Englishmen know of Indian History. Miseries, tyrannies, wars, raids, and the like, are his only ideas of the Indian Past. That is what is taught as Indian History in the Government schools. But how could such wealth, such trade, such commerce, such industry have been found under such misrule? They say in the Rowlatt Report that Indians had known nothing except absolute monarchy until they came into contact with the English. But I have read of large Republics in the past, of constitutional Monarchs with their Councils, of a great minister who declared that as a cart could not run on one wheel, so could a king not work without the help of ministers, of monarchs deposed, executed, for tyranny—you also can find all these recorded; but until you search for yourself outside your school-books you cannot know your history, and so you do not know of what you are capable. If you have history written by foreigners, not written by your own men you have only the foreign view of India, how she appears to the foreigner, and in the school you are apt to have the history which is written to show how much better off you are under the present system, than under the former. Therefore it is that we want a National system of Education, so that, amongst other things, we shall have true Indian

History, and springing from that, patriotism, self-respect, and National pride.

You have Government Education, Missionary Education; you must have the third, National Education. Do not think by that that it is possible for you suddenly to take out of the hands of the Government the whole of education. It is true that according to the first ideas in the Reform Scheme, Education was said to be a transferred subject, that is, it was to go into the hands of the Indian Ministers. They were to administer the funds, they were to control the system, and they were to appoint the officers who were to shape the education of the people. That was the first idea, it was rumoured, regarding education in the Montagu Report. Now there may be a mischievous change made, for we find it is said that University Education, at least, must remain in the hands of the Government; that perhaps Secondary Education should remain in the hands of the Government. What then is to remain for the Indian? Primary Education? Are Secondary and University education to remain under the control of Englishmen? Surely Education cannot be bifurcated. The whole spirit of the one part would be different from the other; the whole tendency of the one diversified from the other, and the utmost confusion would result. Now that is a question to be decided, and it must be decided in the interest of India. I ask you as educationists to do your utmost,

so that Education may be entirely in the hands of the Indian Ministers, and not, as an Imperial subject, in the hands of the Central Government, which maintains "the machinery of autocracy". It is vital for your future, this question now under discussion. Make your voices heard! Take the education of your own sons and daughters under your own control! Can we separate education from politics, if education is to make the child into a citizen, fit to guide the politics of his country? There is nothing in your National life which is not really a political question.

Now what is our National Education system? We do not pretend to take education out of the hands of the Government, but we do want it to be in the hands of the Indian side of the Government; and at some future time a National Government will give National Education. Meanwhile in our work we are only trying to supply the gaps that are left in Government Education. We are trying to give what Government does not give, the National spirit, the pride in, the love of, India. That is the atmosphere of every National school.

Take our little High School in Madras. The boys live in pretty little cottages, where four or five live together, and where the teachers live. Our Boarding House is a little village, with cottages made out of bamboo and palm matting, with a brick foundation and floor—very cheap. On every cottage there is the name of an Indian hero. You see, as you walk on one side,

the name of Shivaji, and on another Akbar, and on another Mira Bai, and under the shadow and influence of those names the boys live. They know what sort of person it was, after whom their cottage is named. They grow up with a pride in him. Thus the spirit of patriotism is breathed in by them in the very act of living ; at the same time they live simply, live in palm leaf cottages, just as many of them may do at home. Therefore, when they go back to their own village, they do not despise the village surroundings, but love and respect the life there, as Indian boys ought to do.

In these and many other ways we are trying to supplement what Government does.

What is our method ? and what ought to be the method of education ? Speaking roughly and generally you can divide it into four parts. You have a Body. You have Emotions—the most potent powers for happiness and misery in the world. Then you have a Mind, the intellectual nature. Then you have a Spirit, which is your life that comes from God—your spiritual nature. We must try to draw out every power belonging to each of these that must be developed, every part of these that must be helped. This is essential. We must carry on right training in the four departments of life, physical, emotional, mental and spiritual. How to behave to your fellow men, what are your duties to them, how you may help them—all this is an essential part of training in each



of the four departments I have mentioned—Physical, Mental, Emotional and Spiritual. It is very simple, absolutely simple when you come to think of it. Only people do not always look at the thing from the largest standpoint, but get lost in a fog of details.

Our method, then, is to classify each part of Education in these four departments, Physical, Emotional, Mental, and Spiritual. How then shall our Education be carried on? You will find it fairly worked out in my pamphlet on the *Principles of Education*. We would divide up the life of a student into certain distinct parts. The training at Home up to 5 years of age, during which his physical body is to be developed, and his emotions to be turned to the unselfish side instead of the selfish one. Then from 5 years of age to 7 he is to remain in a Primary school. How shall the child be taught there? I come again to what I mentioned in the beginning, that you have to find out what are the child's tastes. Now the training is based on the natural instinct of the child to question. When the father comes, the children crowd round him and ask him a good many questions: How is this? What is this? etc. He sometimes finds the questions very troublesome, but the child has come into the world to learn, he wants to know and understand many things he comes across. He wants knowledge, and therefore asks these many questions. There is the beginning of Education ready to hand,

and under the modern system in which they are educated properly, advantage is taken of this attitude of the children. They are set loose in a large room full of all sorts of objects of various shapes and colours, little imitations and a good many real household things. The child perhaps picks up one thing, takes it to the teacher and asks him why is it like this, and why is it like that? The teacher must explain, he must answer the child's questions, whatever they may be, but he does not begin by questioning the child. The child is teaching himself, for he is showing what he wants to know. To teach a child that which he wants to know is the secret of right Education.

It is desirable that the whole of the early education should be based thus on the child's desires, the child's curiosity, the child's questions, for thus you find what the child likes, what he wants to know, and along what lines his faculties lead him. To such schools children come very gladly when the so-called holiday is over, because they are going to a place where they are happy, and where, in that happiness, true education is possible. There is the beginning. Teach the child very gently, by means of many examples, to be hospitable, helpful, serviceable. The child in this manner learns very quickly and is able to pick up very easily, in days, what the other system would not have enabled him to do in weeks.

We hold that the training, the nurture, the nourishing of the body is the chief thing for a young child.

The training of the child's body means healthy manhood or womanhood. It is wrong kinds of physical life at the growing age, which weaken the health for the whole of their future lives. It is in the first seven years of life that the health of the man or woman is built. A careful medical inspection of some very poor schools showed, for instance, that 78% of school children were ill-nourished, had not enough to eat. Such children cannot grow big and strong. Diseases are developed which are hunger diseases, and in that way the great masses of the children are growing up to-day in India. They fall an easy victim to cholera, plague, influenza, because they are not properly fed in their childhood, because they lack vitality, because their bodies were not made strong for the building of a noble and healthy manhood or womanhood.

From 7 to 10 years of age the child should be in the Lower Secondary School, and from 10 to 14 in the Higher Secondary. These seven years see the growth of the emotional nature, the mind also developing but being dominated by emotion. From 10 years of age should come the training of the feelings, which is so vital for the future, so that the surging emotions which accompany and follow puberty may be directed and brought under control instead of poisoning the life. The moral teaching is directed to the developing of the virtues which make the good man and the good citizen. The physical

education includes, for the individual in relation to his body, instruction in the physiology of sex—plant, animal, human—the individual and National need of Brahmacharya in student life. Danger of errors in the great transition from boyhood to manhood. The body to be trained in muscular strength, hardness, and athletics, before the danger-zone is entered. Indian exercises to be practised daily. Carpentry, basket-work and the use of tools to be practised. First Aid to be taught. In the relation to the outer world, the individual must learn his duty to the Motherland of making and keeping vigorous health. The self-control of true manliness. The training of the playground in co-operation, discipline, obedience and the leadership of merit—all are important.

Up to 14 years of age, we do not propose, in our scheme of National Education, to specialise. Throughout the school life manual training has formed a definite part of education, and in the little exhibition opened in connection with the Society for the Promotion of National Education, there are a number of the products of our first six months shown, as well as more advanced work, and you will see the types of manual training exhibited. You will find that all these things made by the children themselves show how from the very childhood the eye is trained. In the same way the ear is trained and the mind. Make the boy a complete and useful citizen of the country, so that he begins to love the work he does, and

one sees how in a few months the faculties develop surprisingly.

At 14 we specialise, and the pupils pass into either : (1) an ordinary High School, with its Art, Science and Teachers' Training Divisions ; (2) a Commercial ; (3) a Technical ; or (4) an Agricultural, High School. The boys and girls, if they are going on still further, put a preparatory class between the school and the University ; three years of University training and a preparatory year are thus occupied. These four lines we specially take up, and according to the exigencies of the case every boy will be prepared for his line for two years, and then he goes on into the College preparatory class. If he wants to go still higher in the collegiate grade, then he should be shown how to do those things which afterwards he will continue to study. The pupil must himself do the things. I saw some little maps in your Delhi Indraprastha High School, especially the map of India, divided into different Provinces and States, and on the place the products of the place were shown, actually pasted on—rice, cotton, etc. These practical lines must be followed, for the things are then remembered. There is no good in teaching the boys mere routine school work and making them dislike agriculture ; such teaching turns out clerks, only able to get from Rs. 12 to Rs. 15 per month, whereas by agriculture they might each earn Rs. 400 to Rs. 500.

In the House of Commons in the year 1812, an especial inspection was made in South India by Sir Thomas Munro. In his evidence he states that there were schools established in every village for teaching reading, writing, etc. ; but that was not all. The following statements occur in the evidence given by him with regard to the civilisation of the Hindūs. He points out the difference between the English and Indian civilisations and then he goes on to speak of what the Indian civilisation was. Firstly, of the good system of agriculture, the unrivalled manufactures, the capacity to produce whatever conveniences were needed. The general spirit of hospitality was noted, and above all a right treatment of the family was marked. He describes how the children were full of confidence, respect and delicacy. These things are indications of high civilisation. That was the state of India in the early nineteenth century. In 1814, the East India Company received a despatch from London which speaks about the village communities and the venerable institutions of the Hindūs. The existence of inscriptions intended obviously to be read by the public, shows that that public could read.

What do we find now ? Illiteracy is general. This ignorance of the masses is an obstacle in the way of India's freedom. Of course there is a mistake that many people now make. If the people do not know English and the English do not know Pañjābī, it does not follow that Pañjābīs are ignorant. But it is true

that village education has decayed, and you will not have a true universal education until you restore your Village Pañchāyaṭs and the schools are controlled by the villagers; only this broad, free system will give you back general culture. They used to have their elected officials in the village, and because the village created them, it could also break them, if they did not fulfil their duties. That is the true secret of the possibilities of the future; that is why Indian civilisation, from ancient times, before the Christian Era, down to our present day, is a grand pageantry of civilisation—because of these villages which were the backbone of Old India. Education was spread to hard-working men, with their unrivalled manufacturing and agricultural skill. That was the state of things down to the nineteenth century.

When we consider the reform of the present condition, a situation different from that in Europe is met. In England for the miserable poor they open special schools. There are National schools, where the children of the more respectable poor are given education. Then above that, in the towns chiefly, the school of a little higher grade where the tradesmen's children are trained. And then there are the great public schools of England, that you hear of, the schools of the well-to-do and the wealthy.

Now we have to consider these questions of social differences in our schools. You cannot in the same school put together children who come from good and

from bad homes. Some poor little creatures, miserable and ill-fed, there will be for some time to come, till our social system is improved. Now in England such children would have gone to a special school. They would have been taught the elements of civilisation, of decent living, and when they had reached a suitable stage they would then go along with the others. Questions of the same sort and similar solutions will probably come up here in connection with some similar classes. Some schools there must be set up, so that cleanliness and the rudiments of living can first be taught, the object being to enable the children to work with the others more happily situated. So the first lesson, when the child comes to school, is for him to wash himself and his cloth, and put on a clean one, given him to begin with. Only then, must he go into the school. The first lesson being learnt, he is ready to learn something more, and the second would generally be food. Then he can begin ordinary lessons, and along these lines changes will be made and reconciled with conditions, if Education is put into Indian hands. It will gradually be made free, if administered by Indian Diwāns. Universities will, in time, be opened, as in Mysore, free to all children. Our village schools have to be made suitable as a preparation for a fuller village life, and therefore should not be controlled from a single centre, but from the Village Pañchāyat, and adapted to the particular conditions



of the village. For these we suggest in our National Schools the beginning with a song and a short prayer, and then a little reading and writing, very short lessons, so that the brain may not become tired with too long periods of work. The moment the child is inattentive, it means that he is not interested, and you are failing in your teaching. Then should come lessons on the objects round the children, flowers, birds and the like, explained by the teacher. A map of the village, made in sand, beginning with the school-house, building the relation of that to the different houses; then, when the child begins to read a map, it is not a mere picture on the wall, but a representation of the things of which he knows something, and so is educative.

The teacher is also a guide to them in the playing of games. How to plan and make baskets, and all the useful things they find round about them, should be part of the work in village National Schools.

Within the outlines I have sketched so roughly, we are trying to improve our National life. We have only a few colleges and schools, here we have worked for six months or more—in some much longer—and to the children they are full of interest, full of life, full of energy. They show no fear. They run up to the teachers, they cling round them as they cling round their fathers and mothers. That means that the minds of the children have become fearless, finding in the teacher a friend. And if I have

spoken about this to you to-day in the great National Week, held for the first time in Delhi—of which the National Congress was the beginning in 1885, since grown more and more not only in the political work of the Congress but the work of the All-India Muslim League, the Industrial Conference, the Educational Conference, the Theosophical Conference, the Home Rule Conference, and, I am glad to say, of the Women's Indian Conference—it is that you may come to give us help in this work we are doing to enrich Indian life. To-day the governing body of the Society for the Promotion of National Education meets and the Senate of the National University is to plan for the coming year. We ask you to take part in the movement. Send us your suggestions, criticise what we are doing, help us to make our work what it ought to be. There are few Englishmen amongst us, because there are very few Englishmen who love India as their Motherland, and no other Englishman but such is allowed to take any real share in our Education work in India. For they must love India, know at least something of India, and have no touch of that abominable taint of race superiority which judges people by their colour and not by the value or welfare of their hearts.

In this National Education work, it is Indians who rule and not English people. I ask for your sympathy, for your co-operation to help on this work to bring up true and valued citizens, for the day when India shall

be free, strong citizens of the future free India, which will be one of the free Nations in the great Democracy that is in the future which lies before the girls and boys. Help us to make them able to bear the burdens and responsibilities of that freedom. Not only the boys but the girls need strength to bear the burdens and responsibilities and the courage to face those of the future, and they need wisdom to be guided to the right. For though to be free is the grandest thing for any man or any Nation, yet with freedom comes responsibility, with power, duty. These children will be the heirs to that power, and on us falls both the responsibility of winning that freedom for them, and of equipping them to appreciate and cherish it.

You are asked to help for the sake of these millions, for the sake of that country, great in its past, to be greater still in its future. For the sake of these, give us your help in the education of India's children, and give her worthy sons and daughters to raise her up in the face of the world.

